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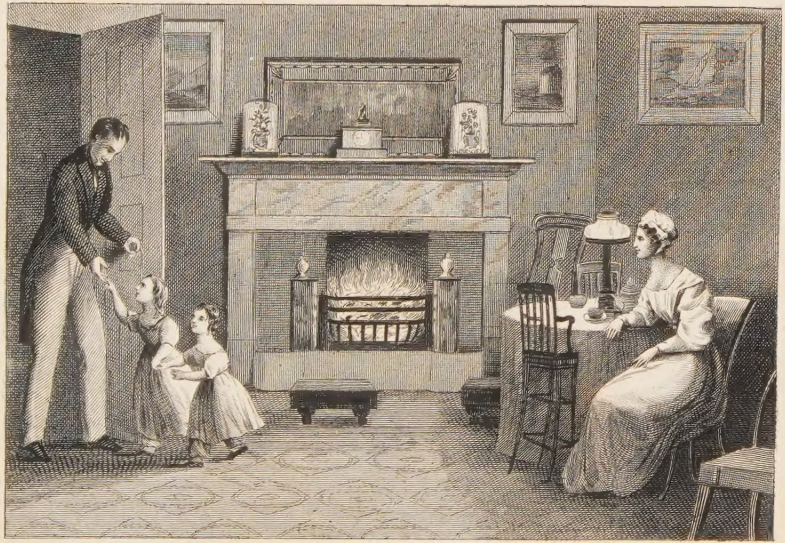

"But the next time she looked at the clock, it was nearly nine, and Mr. Bruce had not come home."

THE

PATH OF PEACE:

OR

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO

DUTY AND HAPPINESS.

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.
Author of "Mother at Home," and "Child at Home."

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TO

THE MEMBERS

OF

THE ELLIOT CHURCH AND SOCIETY,

THIS LITTLE TREATISE

Is affectionately Dedicated

BY

THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR,

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

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PREFACE.

Can that person be a christian, who is so unamiable in character, that his companionship is undesirable? Is devotional feeling acceptable to God, when unaccompanied by the graces of a generous and a lovely spirit? And yet how many christians are there, who are any thing but agreeable companions or desirable friends!

"Mother," said a little boy, "I do not wish to go to Heaven."

"And why not, my son?"

"Why, Grandfather will be there, will he not?"

"Yes, my son, I hope he will."

"Well, as soon as he sees us, he will come scolding along, and say, 'Whew, whew, whew, what are these boys here for.' I am sure I do not wish to go to Heaven, if Grandfather is to be there."

Who has not been conscious of similar feelings? How many professing christians are there, with whom one could not live happily, even in Heaven, unless their characters should be greatly changed.

It is of the utmost importance,—it is absolutely essential to christian character, that we should cultivate those devotional feelings, inculcated in the invaluable writings of Baxter, Taylor and Doddridge, but it is no less essential that we should accustom ourselves to whatsoever things are true, honest and just, pure, lovely and of good report. Moral character and devotional feelings have been, theoretically and practically too much disjoined. It is our object in this book to inculcate their holy and indissoluble alliance, and thus to shew how we should live to be happy ourselves, to promote the happiness of others, and to prepare for the joys of Heaven.

Roxbury, Sept. 1. 1836.

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CHAPTER I.

MERRIMENT IS NOT HAPPINESS.

Not many months since I passed a sabbath in Baltimore. As I came from church, in the afternoon, I saw half a dozen young men sitting around their wine, at the table they had not left since dinner. Fumes of tobacco filled the room. Their faces were flushed with wine and mirth. With the sparkling glass in one hand, and the lighted cigar in the other, their voices were just bursting forth in the riptous song,

> Old king Cole was a jolly old soul,
> And a jolly old soul was he, was he;
> He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl,
> And he called for his fiddlers, three.

I stood, for a moment, upon the stairs, and looked in upon this scene of revelry—upon this band of precocious yet apparently confirmed inebriates. And this, thought I, is a practical exhibition of infidelity. These are the joys

which irreligion offers its votaries. In this school infidelity would train up our young men, and with these characters she would fill our land.

A short time after this, I was in Pittsburg. As I sat at my chamber window enjoying the mild, balmy air of one of the most lovely sabbath mornings in June, no sound disturbed the sacred silence, but the notes of a christian hymn, coming faintly, yet sweetly from an adjoining room. I listened and heard several youthful voices uniting with the rich voice, of apparently the husband and father, in the following words.

> No more fatigue, no more distress,
> Nor sin, nor death, shall reach the place;
> No groans shall mingle with the songs,
> Which warble from immortal tongues.

And this, thought I, is a practical exhibition of christianity. These are the joys, the ennobling, purifying joys, which religion confers. These are the moral influences with which it would surround every individual of the human race. It would seem that the infidel, himself, could not hesitate to choose under which he would have a son or a daughter educated. They, whose hearts are attuned to the melody of such hymns, and who are nurtured under the influence of such a home, have entered the paths of peace.

Many who will peruse these pages have, perhaps, long been seeking happiness in vain. Dis-

appointment has thus far accompanied your search. You are dissatisfied with the present and have no joyful anticipations to light up the future. We would guide you in a better way. We would lead you to fountains of pure and unfailing joy. God has shewn us where those fountains are, and if we follow his directions we shall not seek them in vain.

The promotion of happiness, is the great object which God has in view in all His operations. For this He made men free; for this He gave His law. Every sorrow which is sent to the human heart is sent in love, to promote real and permanent enjoyment. He never willingly afflicts. When the heart is crushed with the heaviest weight of affliction, the voice of God declares, that this affliction is the means, which He is using, to banish sorrow forever, and to fill the heart with joy. Yes! God loves happiness. and is now, in every part of the universe, adopting those plans which to Him seem most effectual for the fulfilment of His benevolence.

Do you question this assertion? Does your mind revert to some chamber of pain and death where God has sent the destroying angel to blight every earthly joy, and to accumulate anguish, which shall for years oppress the heart, by night and by day? Let us then enter this

chamber, and study the meaning of this mystery. How pale the cheek and dim the eye of this little sufferer. Her feeble moan is so affectingly pensive, that tears gush from the eyes of every beholder. She is a mother's only daughter; the choicest treasure of all God's gifts. But the hand of death is upon her. Medical skill has been in vain. Prayers and tears have been unavailing. The last hour has come. The child is dying. Extended on her little bed, with folded hands and fixed eyes she is heavily drawing her last breath, as her spirit struggles to be free. The mother, half delirious with days and nights of sleeplessness and toil, is unfortified for the heart rending scene. She is overwhelmed with agony,—unutterable agony. With frantic step she hurries to the bed, and covers the cheek of her dying child with burning kisses. She sinks into a chair, by the bed side, apparently exhausted with emotion, when suddenly anguish gives her new strength, and wringing her hands, she hurries to and fro through the apartment, exclaiming, "my child is dying; my child is dying; oh! she must not die; God have mercy, have mercy, on her poor mother." Does God stay his hand? No! Look at the little sufferer. Her convulsions become more frequent and more severe. She tries to say "dear mother." But she only

articulates enough to let us know what she would say, and to plunge a new arrow of agony into the mother's heart. Even the groans of the dying child are lost in the loud lamentations of the distracted parent. Is this a picture of the imagination? no! They, who are in the habit of visiting chambers of sickness, know that we faintly paint, from reality. Are such scenes unfrequent? No! They are occurring every hour of every day.

God has but to say the word and the disease is removed, and the child rises from her bed in health and beauty. It requires not the least exertion on the part of God to sweep away all this sorrow, and to fill the dwelling with the most rapturous joy. And why does not God do it? *Because he loves to see his children happy.* He has perhaps tried all other means to wean this mother's heart from sin, that she might be really and permanently happy in Heaven. This is His last resort, to make her happy. He lays his hand upon her darling child, and He thus speaks to her in a voice more loud and more impressive than He could in any other way. And does He thus plead in vain? If He does, it is because she refuses to yield to the efforts, which God makes, to save her from sorrow, and to make her the child of uninterrupted and unending joy. This is the object God has in

view. It is one of the most signal evidences of the efforts God makes to save from sorrow. In a few days call in to that dwelling again, and perhaps you will see the mother calm and peaceful. She speaks of God and Heaven, in a manner which shows you at once that she has entered a new world of joy. She smiles, in the midst of her tears, as she speaks of that happy world to which she trusts her child has gone, and already in gratitude, she blesses God that she has been afflicted. And in succeeding years, as she draws nearer her heavenly home, she thanks God with more fervor, that He, by the death of her child, led her to think of the salvation of her soul. And when she is taking her departure from the world, she says that the choicest blessing she had on earth was the voice which came to her heart through her dying child. God assures us that He never willingly afflicts. He has filled Heaven with joy, and, would we yield to His directions and His pleadings, He would imbue every heart with the spirit of Heaven and fill earth with happiness.

God has told us what feelings we must cherish, and what habits we must cultivate, if we would be happy. And he has urged us by the most powerful of all possible considerations to pursue the path He has thus marked out.

He assures us that then we shall please Him, and exhibit to the universe the purity of His benevolence and the perfection of His plans; that thus we shall promote the happiness of all God's creatures, and saving ourselves from ceaseless remorse, shall be elevated to dwell in His courts, and to share in dignity and joy, such as earthly eye has never seen, or earthly heart conceived.

It will be my object in this little treatise, to guide the reader to these habits of feeling and of life. The Bible is the teacher whose directions I shall follow. In explaining and illustrating the principles of its instructions, I feel confident that I am directing my readers to sure and unfailing enjoyment. Your toil here will most certainly be accompanied with success. Here you cannot seek in vain. Even if, for a season, your efforts appear to be unavailing, the most triumphant success will be your final accomplishment. Why do so many pass their lives in the fruitless pursuit of pleasure, and find in a dying hour that the past has been but a dream of vanity, and that the most fearful uncertainty clouds the future with gloom. It is because, disobeying the directions of God, they have sought enjoyment in regions where God assures them that only disappointment and sorrow can be found. They have forsaken the plain

path which God marked out for them, and entering the wilderness of forbidden allurements, have wandered and perished amid its glooms.

Life is strewed with the wrecks of temporal and eternal happiness. Wherever the eye ranges, or thought penetrates, we find the memorials of disappointment and spiritual ruin. Look at this young lady. She seems formed by God, to be the recipient and the distributer of the most pure and unalloyed enjoyment. Her Heavenly Father has conferred upon her the endowments of a good mind and an affectionate heart. He has surrounded her with every essential to earthly comfort, and placing the Bible in her hands to guide her from the rocks and quick-sands, which endanger her present and future happiness, bids her obey its directions and be blest forever. What does she do? Why, with an infatuation which is almost inconceivable, she places the Bible upon her shelf unexamined, and plunges headlong into the midst of those very dangers against which it so affectionately warns her. Day after day, her heart is oppressed with the ravages of disappointment and chagrin; and yet her impetuous career of thoughtlessness is unchecked. Watch her movements as she glitters in the illumined halls of gaiety. Her heart throbs in sympathy with "music's voluptuous swell." She is half

intoxicated with the excitement of the scene. In graceful measures she is gliding through the giddy mazes of the dance, and for a moment finds, perhaps, the counterfeit semblance of joy. And yet the semblance is faint indeed. Restlessness and vague anxiety rebuke her when she says, "I have now found happiness." And when, long after the hours of midnight, she returns exhausted to her home, and her silent chamber, and commits her throbbing head to the pillow, the conflicting emotions of her bosom are so turbulent and stormy, that she is a stranger, not merely to happiness, but even to serenity of mind and to the composure of ordinary peace. She feels dissatisfied with herself, she hardly knows why. In feverish dreams the morning wears away. And when late she rises, languid and dejected, to toil painfully through the hours of the day, she is constrained to admit that the pleasure of the moment was most dearly bought. She is sadly disappointed in her pursuit, and yet, as she knows not where else to look for joy, she continues in a kind of submissive desperation, to be borne onward by the crowd with which she mingles. Now why is she not happy? Simply because she is seeking happiness in the wrong place—in a place where happiness never has been, and never can be found. If she would attend to the directions

which God had given her, she would know at once that it would be perfect folly to seek true enjoyment in such scenes. But she does not heed these directions. If, at times, she allows her eye to glance over them, it is with careless thought, or with a guilty feeling, that few as her enjoyments are, God would make them still less.

God never prohibits any thing which really and permanently promotes our happiness. When, in His word, He cautions us against any worldly allurement, it is because it is an allurement to sorrow, and not to joy. When He enjoins upon us any duty, or any act of self-denial, it is because obedience to that injunction will promote the reign of peace and joy in the heart. But the fashionable lady, in the whirl of gaiety and exciting show, does not believe this; she sees no beauty in those peaceful walks to which her Father's hand would guide her. The shades, which God assures her will be soothing and refreshing, to her appear dark and gloomy. She has not confidence in God's declarations, and breaks away from His hand, to pursue the false glitter against which He warns her. At last she wakes from this exciting dream, but she awakes not to life, but to death. In the chamber of silence and pain she reviews her worthless life, and weeps in bitterness of spirit

to find that she has lived in vain, and is going down to an unhonored grave. In the retrospect of her privileges and opportunities for doing good, she can hardly find an event upon which her mind reposes with pleasure. The past is all one dead level of uselessness, she has lived for herself alone, and yet she has done herself no good. She has passed her life in the pursuit of pleasure, and is now, at its close, farther than ever from the attainment of her object. Death is coming to claim her armed with terrors. The grave is dark and dreadful. For judgment she is all unprepared; the Savior is a stranger to her; the spirit has ever been grieved away, and all the talents which were entrusted to her keeping, have been uncultivated. She has nothing to look forward to, but guilt and shame. She utters loudly in the ears of weeping friends, the language of lamentation for her folly, and dies, leaving her sad history a warning to others, that God knows, better than we, what will promote the happiness of the creatures He has made.

But the question again arises, why does God prohibit the pursuit of pleasure, in those scenes, which, to say the least, appear alluring to the youthful heart? The prohibition seems not to be the arbitrary decision of God, but has its foundation in the very nature of man. God has

not placed us in the midst of scenes capable of affording us real enjoyment, and then commanded us to abstain from these enjoyments. He has created us but little lower than the angels, with minds immortal, and capable of infinite expansion, and burning with desires for angelic joys. In trivial pursuits, we can find nothing which affords satisfaction to minds created with such noble endowments. The well fed kitten finds its congenial element of joy, when frisking by the fireside. These joys are adapted to its nature. But this young lady, who seeks enjoyment in the color of a ribbon, or in the frivolities of fashion, is out of her element. She is an immortal being, and has stooped to things too trivial for an immortal mind; and until God degrades her mind, and gives her a lower place in the scale of being, she can not satisfy the aspirations of her soul with such emptiness and vanity. She wonders why she is not happy. She has forgotten her rank in the scale of being! She has forgotten who is her Father! She has forgotten that she is the heiress of all heaven's treasure! She brings her immortal mind, with its vast capacities, with its unlimited powers, to seek enjoyment in those frivolities, which are only adapted to the nature of the playful kitten, or the sportive lamb! And yet she wonders why she is not happy!

It is true that the frown of God is upon us, when we thus forget our nature and our destiny. But it is not *His frown* alone which darkens our sky. The empty void of the heart, so universal, as to have become a proverb with all nations, and at every age, can only be filled by the pursuit of objects adapted to the elevation of our nature. Even if God did not regard with displeasure the waste and the perversion of our faculties, it necessarily results from the constitution of man, created in the image of God, and allied in dignity with angelic spirits, that he can not be satisfied with any pleasures, but those which are pure and elevated. He must soar on angel wings, and hold intercourse with the Eternal, and become familiar with joys kindred to those which are found in heaven, before this empty void can be filled. To sum up all in one comprehensive sentence, he can never be satisfied, till he awakes in Christ's likeness. When this desire animates him; when he adopts the sentiment,

> "Be Thou my pattern, make me bear
> More of thy gracious image here—"

then he begins to live worthy of himself. Then he has entered the paths of peace into which God would guide him. He then begins to find the long sought treasure. The turbulence of

passion is quelled. The "waves of trouble, cease to roll across his peaceful breast." "Yes!" said once the dying christian, "I cannot now be disappointed. What is God's will, is my will, I have no will of my own. I am already in heaven, its glories and its joys fill my soul."

When we take the Bible for our guide, and the Savior for our pattern, we have entered the path which surely leads to certain and unending joy. Turn from the lady of fashion and pleasure, to the christian female whose days are cheered by faith and hope. Her mind familiar with eternal things, soars in its native element, and is ready at any time to wing its flight to nobler worlds. She awakes in the morning, not exhausted with the revelry of a dissipated night, but refreshed with quiet sleep, and prepared for the faithful discharge of the duties of life. Her morning prayer tranquillizes her spirit, to meet the trials of the day. At the bed of sickness she loves to sit, ready to administer support and sympathy. By her cheerfulness and affection, and ready discharge of every act of kindness, she makes home happy, and draws to herself the hearts of all who encircle the family fireside. The day is past in usefulness. She shrinks not from self denial, that she may do the will of her Father. And when the evening has passed, and her grateful heart offers its evening homage

of praise, she retires to rest at peace with herself and with all the world! How sweet are her slumbers! How serene are her thoughts! And thus her days glide away. She has many sorrows, but every trial brings with it a consolation. When old age comes and she waits for her departure, eternity is spread before her in its most brilliant hues. Her meditations are delightful; her anticipations of the future most joyful. Her pleasures are immortal pleasures. They survive the hour of death, and will bear transporting beyond the grave. She has given free scope to the nobleness of her nature, and here on earth has acquired a relish for those joys, which allure her soul in brighter worlds.

Look at two children commencing life together. In the sports of childhood they are united, and each advancing year increases their intimacy and strengthens their friendship. At an early age one of them becomes pious, and consecrates her heart and her life to the service of her Maker. The other continues in light hearted indifference to all the realities of a future world, and to all the real responsibilities of life. Here of course their paths begin to diverge, and though they both make efforts to continue their intimacy, and to perpetuate their friendship, every day increases the dissimilarity of their feelings, and of their enjoyments. They are

both in circumstances of comparative wealth, and the prospects which are opening before them in life, are more than ordinarily animating.

The pious girl becomes the wife of a foreign missionary. See her standing upon the deck of the ship, as they unfurl the sails to the wind. Her heart is bleeding as she bids adieu to kindred and friends. A superficial world regards her with pity, but it is because they know not the motives which actuate her, and the consolations which fill her heart. As the breeze propels the ship from the shore, and the blue haze of her country fades away in the distance, consolations, of noble nature and of heavenly origin, come, as an angel from heaven, and strengthen her. And as, in the solitude of the ocean, she gazes upon the stars hung out in the midnight sky, and thinks with rapture of the mansion prepared for her there, oh think you, that she is a stranger to enjoyment? Think you she would exchange that rich happiness, which melts her heart, and causes the tears to gush into her eyes, for any enjoyment the fashionable belle has ever found, in illumined halls, and pretty ribbons, and gaudy dress? Angels gaze with interest upon the moral sublimity of the work in which she has engaged, and may almost covet the toils and sacrifices she is permitted to endure. She

is engaged in her Father's work, and receives those satisfying rewards her Father knows, so well how to confer.

Look at her again, she has passed weeks and months upon the stormy ocean, and is just gazing upon the distant outline of the dark islands, where she is to pass her life and find her grave. Oh who can tell the emotions which thrill through her heart, as she leans upon her husband's arm and gazes upon the opening wonders of her new and final home. As the ship nears the shore, the dim mountains rise to view. The luxuriant forest waves deep and dark over the extended hills and vallies. Wild natives shout along the shore, or, with hasty paddle, propel the canoe over the waves. As with uncouth gesticulation and unintelligible jargon, they throng around the ship, and climb its sides, and her heart almost faints within her at the sight of the degraded creatures with whom she is to spend her days, think you that hope—heavenly hope—does not animate her, as in the visions of the future she sees them elevated, through her instrumentality, from sin to holiness, and presented, rejoicing in pardon, at the throne of heaven? Ask her if she is willing to turn from those shores, and again seek her highly favored American home. She will tell you no! And in her humble dwelling, surrounded by unin-

structed heathen, she will perhaps experience hours of as unalloyed enjoyment, as is to be found on earth. She is strengthened by faith, and animated by hope. The consciousness that she is in the service of God, gives her a degree of substantial happiness, such as the votary of worldly pleasure never knew. Could you hear the silent prayer her heart is offering, you would perceive it to be the prayer of praise. She blesses God that she is permitted to enter such a field of labor, and to engage in so glorious an enterprise.

Look at her again. She is borne down with infirmities and cares. A humble hut is her home, and disease and hardship have made sad ravages upon her feeble frame. Her days of toil are nearly numbered, and she expects soon to find the repose of the grave. But mark her demeanor! How calm and serene and subdued. Gaze upon that countenance! It is already lighted up as with the purity of heaven. Listen to her conversation! It comes from an untroubled and a rejoicing heart. Ask her if she is happy? Every feature of her countenance will say yes. Ask her if she looks back with regret upon the choice she made in early life? And in the fulness of overflowing gratitude, she will tell you, that she blesses God that she was led thus to choose. She has entered the ways

of pleasantness; she has found the paths of peace. And oh how triumphant is the hour of her departure from the world. The exulting language of the dying Christian is on her lips.

"Lend, lend your wings, I mount, I fly!
Oh grave where is thy victory?
Oh death where is thy sting?

But trace out the history of her early friend. She moves in the gay circles of fashionable life. Her mind is enfeebled in its powers by the emptiness of her pursuits. A few short years wear out the novelty of all ordinary scenes of pleasure. As she has no other resource she is doomed to ever increasing satiety. Her hours of depression and days of listlessness are uncheered by bright prospects in the future. She tries to appear happy, and when thoughtless friends are around her, she buries deep in her bosom the disappointments which are weighing upon her spirits. Handsome furniture, and expensive dress, and loud laughing companions, cannot save from the heart ache. Conscience often reproaches her, for her neglect of God and useless life. She resolves and re-resolves, yet lives the same. Many, who see her surrounded with all earthly comforts, and luxuries, think she must be happy. But did they know the truth, they would pity her as the victim of disquietude

and almost of remorse. But at last her days are also terminated. In a chamber of splendor, and on a bed of down, she lies down to die. In the solitude of the darkened apartment, her mind reverts to the past scenes of life, and a faithful conscience, deprives her of peace. The fever in her heart is more painful than that which is coursing through her veins. The anguish of her spirit compels her to forget her parched lips and throbbing brow. There is no medicine, but the balm of Gilead, which can cure one who is sick at heart. Oh go into that chamber; sit down by that dying bed; gaze upon the anxious countenance of the sufferer who is there; listen to her language of self condemnation, as she mourns over her wasted life; hear her speak of the insulted Savior; the grieved spirit, the neglected Father! The glooms of the eternal world are gathering around her; and, as she goes down into the dark valley, not one ray of joy cheers the fainting spirit. Poor lost sinner! angels may weep over your ruin! And is this the path into which thousands are rushing, vainly thinking it the path of peace! What fearful delusion! It is the broad road to ruin! The path to woe, irremediable and eternal.

See these two young men, riding out from the city in the morning of this lovely sabbath.

Each has a cigar in his mouth, and with the top of the chaise thrown back, they are urging the horse to the extent of his speed. Their loud voices and boisterous laugh, fall painfully upon the ears of the serious people, who are on their way to church. They rein up the horse at some dissipated and fashionable place of resort, and are soon seated in a little back parlor, which has witnessed many a scene of riot and of ruin. Two other congenial companions join them. The table is spread. The cards are produced. Wine and glasses are upon the table, and upon the mantle-shelf a lighted candle and cigars. Bottle after bottle is called for, as they drink deep and play long. Louder and louder their voices rise, as the tide of excitement swells, and late in the evening, the rattle of their wheel is heard, and their inebriating song, swells upon the night air, as they return to the city.

Who is that young man with flushed cheek and tottering limbs and aching head, so late in the morning opening the store? It is one of those tavern rioters. His fevered brain is not yet cooled. His trembling nerves have not yet recovered from the sabbath day's debauch. The excitement of his spirit yesterday has caused a corresponding depression to day. He is so gloomy and so miserable that life itself is almost a burden. The duties of the day are intolerably

toilsome, as he draws through them oppressed by the double weight of an enfeebled body, and a remorseful spirit. He cannot shut out from his thoughts a widowed mother, who is looking to him for her heart's comfort and her support. He cannot banish from his mind the knowledge, that during the hours of the sabbath, when he was bidding defiance to the authority of God, a pious mother's prayers were ascending to heaven in his behalf. Yes, this dissolute young man, yesterday so boisterous in his mirth, and so daring in his sins, is to day a poor, pitiable, wretched victim of remorse and shame. When he goes alone to his chamber Monday night, as thoughts of home crowd upon his mind, and the remembrance of his sins oppresses his conscience, he almost curses the day of his birth. This is the young man who, in the excitement of his revellings, shouts,

"A short life and a merry one."

And even when he says it, he knows, that but few more miserable creatures are to be found, than he. Our cities are filled, literally filled, with these victims of delusion. They are blighting every prospect of earthly happiness—impairing their health, and hurrying themselves to a premature grave. Miserably they live, and infinitely more miserably they die. These are the

young men who in such throngs become bankrupt in fortune and in character, and who then, in the desperate endeavor to repair their ruined prospects, crowd to the south and the west, and, by thousands, find a grave upon the banks of the Mississippi. Such is the path into which they madly rush in the pursuit of happiness. How melancholy in its progress. How awful in its termination.

Compare with this the history of the sedate young man who reveres his Bible, and adores his God. You will see him sabbath morning going with peaceful countenance and tranquil heart, to meet his class in the sabbath school. The sabbath is to him a day of rest from worldly care and toil, and by its sacred influence his mind is enlarged, and his spirit refreshed to engage with new vigor in the duties of life. The instructions of the pulpit enlighten his understanding, and purify his heart. He becomes acquainted with the wants of the world, with his own character and duty and destiny. Every week he is rising in the scale of being, and gathering around his character the respect and confidence of all who know him. His untroubled countenance shews that there is peace within.

Soon we see him with his wife and children seated at his own fireside. There are joys enough

there to chain him to his home. Look in upon that peaceful scene. His children, with picture-books or pencils and paper, are silently amusing themselves at the table. His happy wife, with needle and thread, is employed in her appropriate duties, and her confiding heart is a stranger to neglect or anxiety. As she plies the needle, he, for their mutual improvement, reads some interesting book, which makes the hours of the evening glide along upon their swiftest wings. The hour for rest at length arrives. The family Bible is opened. He reads.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

He receives these instructions as the teachings of the Lord. They influence his mind and control his conduct. He needs no labored proof, to satisfy him of the divine origin of the Bible. Such sentiments as these, he feels assured, could never come from the hearts of impostors. His

faith is firm and untroubled. And oh who does not covet the peace of his mind, as he bows at the family altar to offer his evening prayer.

"Heavenly Father," he says, "we thank thee for the rich mercies and unnumbered enjoyments of this day. Thou hast indeed been our Father and our friend. Thou hast supplied all our wants, protected us from sorrow, and conferred upon us a tranquillity of mind, which the world cannot give and cannot take away. Oh wilt thou be pleased, for Jesus Christ's sake, to accept this evening our offering of gratitude and praise.

"It is in the name of our adorable Redeemer, that we look to Thee for forgiveness of our sins. Many are the years we have passed in forgetfulness of all thy goodness, and even now, every day and every hour, we have occasion to mourn over the ingratitude, and the corruption of our hearts. But we bless Thee for the gift of thy dear Son, that though sinners we may rejoice in the assured hope of pardon.

"Bless our beloved children. Oh preserve them from sin and death. Send thy spirit, oh Lord, to sanctify their hearts, and enable us, by our instructions and our example, to lead them to see and to feel the beauty of holiness. Wilt thou aid us, so to watch over our thoughts and words and actions, that we may never bring a stain upon that cause we profess to love.

"And now, heavenly Father, be this night our Father and our friend. Shield our household from every calamity. May we sleep in peace and awake in safety. And when we have done with earth, oh grant that we, and all dear to us, may be forever united in thy kingdom, and the praise shall be thine forever, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen."

This young man has found the paths of peace. When sorrow comes, he has a rich and unfailing support. When a dying hour comes, he sweetly falls asleep in Jesus, like a confiding babe in its mother's arms. Oh happy, happy young man. You are soon to be an angel, elevated in dignity, abounding in bliss, and soaring amid the glories of your eternal home.

When the mind turns from such scenes as these, to boisterous haunts of dissipated pleasure, how pitiable in the comparison appears the mirth of these votaries of sin. And how emphatic is the decision of the judgment, that the true path to happiness, is the one which the Bible points out. The farther we stray from these paths, the more surely do we plunge ourselves into sorrow.

In the continuation of this little volume, I shall endeavor to guide my readers more particularly, to the feelings they must cherish and the habits they must cultivate, to fill the heart's empty void, and to ensure mental peace. I have no new the-

ory to suggest; no novel plan to propose. I shall merely take the Bible as my guide, and endeavor to unfold its principles and illustrate its truths. I write not for technical theologians, but for the great multitude of sincere hearted, honest inquirers for life and peace.

I would see the young man fortified by christian principles, to meet the great duties of life. And here I hope he will find a friendly guide to point out to him the dangers which beset his path. Tens of thousands rush to early ruin for the want of friendly counsel. Step by step they proceed in the career of folly, till they enter the regions of crime, and as they fall into a dishonored grave, they leave to parents and sisters the awful legacy of blighted hearts and shame.

I would lead the young woman, in whatever rank in life she may be found, to divest life of the false hues, which romance too often throws around it. I would teach her, that her own heart must be the centre of her happiness, and that it should be the fountain to cheer and gladden others. How many, in the frivolities of their early years, become totally incapacitated for domestic joy. And when they assume the name of wife and mother, it is but to lose a husband's respect, and to be the mother of an ungoverned and ungrateful offspring. Her destitution of right feelings, and neglect of right practices

drives her husband to seek enjoyments away from home, and she soon in poverty and disgrace, weeps over the irremediable ruin, she has brought upon her family and herself. We would if possible avert such ruin.

In how many families, surrounded with every earthly blessing, are daily witnessed scenes of contention which embitter every enjoyment. A fretful wife or an irritable husband, keeps the family in a continual babel of discord. It is with difficulty that a stranger smile can be kept upon the cheek, even during the brief call of a friend. That home, where almost heavenly joy might reign, is the abode of jealousy and peevishness and discontent. These "fury passions of the mind," have almost unlimited sway, and here youthful immortals are trained up in an atmosphere which must wilt all the nobler feelings of the soul, and which is preparing them to live, as their parents live, the victims, and the promoters, of sorrow. We would, if possible, diminish the number of such families.

To accomplish this object we present the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, drawn out in all its practical influences upon the heart and the life. It is a guide to duty and to happiness, and he who follows its directions will be led through paths of peace.

CHAPTER II.

MORAL CULTURE.

IMPROVEMENT of personal character is always our first duty. Our usefulness and our happiness depend almost entirely upon our moral and intellectual condition. A man of vulgar mind and ungoverned passions, can hardly be in a situation in which he will be happy; let him inherit all the wealth and honors of one of England's proudest nobles; lead him through the halls of his princely dwelling, and surround him with obsequious servants, bowing to his will; let him pass, in charioted splendor, over his extended parks and magnificent pleasure ground;—through all the beauties which wealth, has been for centuries adding to nature's loveliness;—give him all the luxuries which opulence can confer and all the respect which the most honorable station can elicit, and his own irritable spirit will poison all. In the midst of every thing which earth can afford, to make him happy, he will be a wretch. His morning drives, will confer no pleasure. His palace, will be tapestried with gloom. The very luxuries around him, will pall his appetite to satiety and disgust.

Take another man of well disciplined mind and highly cultivated moral feelings, and you can hardly place him in a situation where he will not find contentment. Like the bee, he will extract honey even from the poisoned flower. Let sickness come, and his cheerful spirit, will divest the chamber of sickness, of its gloom. Deprive him of his property, and he will with a smile take the carpet from his floor, and the sofa from his fireside. He will enter a more humble dwelling, and spread his table with more frugal fare, and clothe himself and family in plainer garb, not only without a murmur, but with a cheerfulness which will revive the desponding spirit of his dependant family. These little trials can not agitate the still waters of his heart. He has within him fountains of enjoyment. Such a man is placed above the storms of life. They may howl around his dwelling, but they can not destroy his peace.

1. To attain this self control, the first essential is to live in habitual communion with God. The mind thus becomes accustomed to look upon life, as a state of pilgrimage, and earthly sorrows dwindle away, into the petty inconveniences of the journey. The man whose eye is fixed upon the bright things which faith reveals, meets these trials, as the good humored traveller, encounters rough roads, or a rainy day, or an uncomfortable

tavern. He feels that they are but transient inconveniences which will soon be forgotten. The mind which is familiar with the contemplation of God, and eternity, lives like the sun in the clear heavens, far away from vapors, and clouds, and storms. This is the case in so eminent a degree, that many a christian becomes almost entirely regardless of the wealth and the honor of the world. With alacrity he enters into the service of God, under circumstances in which he knows he is to meet with but poverty, and reproach. Voluntarily he turns away from the inviting paths of affluence and renown, and engages in the great work of life, as though it were but the toil of a summer's day. As an instance, witness Brainerd, leaving behind him home, and friends, and all earthly comforts,—penetrating the wilds, which spread their glooms around the Susquehannah, and taking up his abode for life in the wigwam of the Indian. Witness Henry Martyn, a voluntary exile from all that England can afford to cheer the eye, and delight the mind, and warm the heart. He spends his nights in study, and his days in toil, to benefit the vicious, and ungrateful. He is apparently, as regardless of wealth and fame, as if he were an angel from heaven, just touching, for a moment, upon this our planet, to return again to the bosom of his God. Such men, animated by faith, and strength-

ened by prayer, have a prospect before their eyes so brilliant, that it dims the lustre of every earthly allurement. The eye rejoices in the vision of the bright scenes of heaven. The ear is regaled with the melody of its rapturous songs, Before these vivid joys, which faith reveals, earth's sorrows and changes fade away.

Reader, if you would triumph over the ills of life, you must enter into a holy alliance with christian faith. If you would enjoy a calm and heavenly frame, you must acquire it by walking closely with God. If you would disarm affliction, and be the victor of death, you must obtain aid of God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. You must go often to the retirement of your closet. By free and full confession of sin, you must humble your own spirit, and deeply imbibe the consciousness of your own weakness, that you may be made strong through Christ. By the fervor of secret devotion you must keep the flame of love burning warm in your heart. No real advancement in moral culture can be made, without frequently unbosoming yourself to God in secret prayer. And if you are in the habit of going confidingly to God, in all your joys and sorrows,—of enumerating before him your individual sins and frailties, and expressing gratitude for the particular mercies of each day, you will most as-

suredly grow in grace, you will be aided, by the Holy Spirit, to triumph over passion and sin; your path will be as the ascending sun, shining brighter and brighter to the perfect day.

In secret prayer the confession of sin should be definite and minute. Have you at any time during the day indulged in an irritable spirit? Have you spoken hastily, or unkindly to those about you? Has vanity, that almost universal sin, at any time triumphed? Have you thought or said, or done any thing which you would be unwilling that God had seen and heard? Mention the specific case. Enumerate the particulars. Spread it all out in full and hearty confession before God and implore his forgiveness.

Here is a christian lady entering her parlor in the morning. She finds that the servant has made some gross blunder in her morning duties. The breakfast table is not properly arranged; the toast, perhaps, is burnt, or tea has been provided instead of coffee. At once she is thrown off her guard. Her peace of mind is all gone. Vexed and irritated, she loads the careless servant, with all that lady-like abuse, with which not a few parlors are familiar. When the husband enters, he finds his wife with flushed cheek, and clouded brow, and all the enjoyment of the morning meal is gone. Yes! the happiness of that whole family, is in the keeping of

that careless servant. Had this lady lost her husband, or her child by death, she would have found support under the calamity, from the consolations which religion affords. But she allows her mind to be in perpetual vexation from these trifles of life. Her spirit is every day irritated, her disposition soured, and her heart hardened, simply because an ignorant domestic is unfaithful. She hardly strives to avoid the petulance which this thorn in the flesh excites, and consequently her own happiness, and that of her family are continually embittered by this want of self control. She apparently is not aware that these petty trials are ordered, by a wise God, that we may be disciplined in the virtues of patience and resignation. When one has thus yielded to sin, she ought at once to enter her closet and not to leave it till she obtains forgiveness.

"Oh God!" she should say, "I have greatly sinned. I have dishonored religion in the eyes of my servant, and in the eyes of my family. I have allowed the most trivial annoyance, to fill my heart with irritation and anger; have indulged in passions, which have disturbed the happiness of the family. Oh God forgive me. Thou art continually witnessing *my* neglect of duty, and my violation of *thy* commands; yet I am as ready to censure and find fault, as though

I never did wrong myself. Oh heavenly Father, for the sake of thy dear Son, have mercy upon me. I have occasion to weep and be ashamed, that my passions are under such feeble restraint. I know, that, by thus giving loose to my passions, I bring a stain upon the cause of Christ, and repel others from the religion I profess. I am indeed a poor sinful creature thus to yield to such trifling temptations. Wilt thou aid me, by thy Spirit, for the remainder of this day, in some degree to repair the injury, I have done. May I by cheerfulness, restore enjoyment to my family, and by self-control, guard against yielding to such wicked passions. Thy Son, oh God! has died for my sins. It is in his name, and for his sake, I ask for pardon, and forever I will praise Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Amen."

This is the way, and the only way that sin can he banished from the heart. As long as sin reigns within, you must be the victim of passion and sorrow. And you should be every hour of the day, watching your thoughts and words and actions, that you may detect sin, and confess it, and obtain God's aid, to banish it from your heart. Want of submission to the will of God in those perpetually recurring annoyances, to which He has permitted us to be exposed, that our faith, and patience, may be ex-

ercised, constitute, probably, by far the greatest amount of the sins of christians. And there is many a christian who seems to think that occasional peevishness, is not inconsistent with a subdued and devotional mind. Think not that this subject is one of little importance. More happiness is destroyed by this one cause, than by almost any other which can be enumerated. It brings more care-worn wrinkles upon the brow, and instils more restlessness to the heart, than poverty, or pain. Determine then, through the grace of God, to triumph, decisively to triumph, over this sin. Go to your closet, and there minutely relate to God, your temptations, and your weakness. You will find that His strength, will aid your weakness, and that His grace, will be sufficient for you.

It is important that you should have stated seasons for secret prayer. Without this, it will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to be faithful in the discharge of the duty. In every pursuit of life, system is all important, to ensure success. Prayer must be a part of our business. Communion with God, must be *the essential* duty of every day.

Set apart some portion of the day when you can withdraw for a few moments, with the least difficulty, and perseveringly adhere to your resolution. This is a point which requires more

decision, than is generally supposed. But be decided. Determine that you will serve God, whatever else you must neglect.

The cultivation of this devotional spirit, is the first great duty of life. Here must be laid the foundation of your christian character. Here must be found the source of all your efforts to do good, and to get good. In the silence of the closet, as your soul communes with God, you will obtain almost supernatural strength to triumph over temptation and to go on your Christian way rejoicing. Do you need argument, to satisfy you of the truth of these sentiments? Need I point your attention, to the injunctions of the Bible; to the example of the Savior; to the habits of the early christians, and to the testimony of the eminently good of every age? This argument direct and simple and conclusive as it is, is still unnecessary. The mind that sees not the propriety of secret prayer; that feels not the necessity of this confiding intercourse with its Maker, is beyond the influence of argument. There are some truths so palpable, that they need only to be stated that they may be felt.

Are you anxious for the salvation of your soul, seeking peace, yet finding none? Frequent your closet. In secret prayer lay before God all your sorrows and all your desires. There surrender your heart to God, trusting in the atoning sacri-

fice of his Son, for the pardon of your sins, and you will assuredly find peace. He who has said, ask and ye shall receive, will lend an attentive ear to your prayer, and will accept the offering of a penitent heart. It is in the closet that you must commence your journey towards heaven; and it is in the closet, that you must daily obtain strength, to encounter the trials and the temptations of the way.

2. Cultivate a grateful spirit. There is hardly any form which sin assumes, more inconsistent with christian character, than a habitual state of discontent. The heart long practised in arts of self deception, often mistakes ungrateful murmurs, for penitence, and repinings at the allotments of God, for weanedness from the world. But does an earthly parent love to see his children continually complaining. Does he love to see his sons and daughters murmuring because others have privileges which they can not enjoy? And can God be better pleased when he sees one of his children forgetting gratitude, and manifesting a spirit of disquietude? Your husband is perhaps not a christian. And is that a reason why you should, day after day, move about the house with a disfigured countenance, ungrateful for the ten thousand other blessings, which God is lavishing upon you? And think you that God will be induced by your

ingratitude for the blessings you already enjoy, to add still more to their number? And do you think that your husband, will be allured to the Savior, when he sees you every day, and every hour indulging in feelings, which embitter every earthly enjoyment, and which he knows that God must regard as sin! Many an unconverted husband has been effectually repelled from religion, by the gloom which has overcast the countenance and the heart of his wife. Many a child has been confirmed in sin by the mournful austerity of pious parents. The gloom which sits upon the countenance, the child thinks is the external manifestation of piety, and he shrinks from an influence so saddening. We should feel that every blessing we receive is undeserved, and let thankfulness be the tribute for the past, and hope cheer the future. Ingratitude is one of the greatest and most universal of sins. And against this sin, the christian should strive with a perseverance, that never shall be overcome. The pious wife, should indeed feel deeply, and pray earnestly, for her unconverted husband. Her closet should bear witness, to the fervor of her daily intercessions in his behalf. She may there give vent to her feelings, in tears of solicitude, and plead in the fervency of the most intense emotion, that her husband may be saved. If she does not feel deeply, and pray earnestly, she can

not expect a blessing. But she should also show God that she feels grateful for past favors, and she should manifest by her cheerfulness, her submission to His will or she can not expect that additional blessings will be conferred.

Gratitude is a virtue to be acquired. You must make constant efforts, to accustom your heart to grateful emotions. It is as necessary that the christian should make efforts to acquire those moral feelings which are pleasing to God, as it is that the student should toil early and late, in the acquisition of knowledge. Cherish then the habit of looking at the *blessings*, with which you are surrounded. You retire to rest at night, oppressed, perhaps, with that mysterious dejection of spirits, which occasionally comes over us, we hardly know why. But do not fall asleep in that frame of mind. In meditation, gather around you your blessings. Think how abundantly during the day, all your temporal wants have been supplied. You have been preserved from bodily pain, from remorse. You have not been abandoned by God to plunge into gross sin, and your soul is cheered with hopes of heaven. You cannot reflect upon the blessings with which you are surrounded without finding them more than can be numbered. You cannot reflect upon these favors many moments, without giving utterance to your grateful emotions in exclaiming

"bless the Lord oh my soul, and let all that is within me bless and praise His holy name." Before such reflections the murky vapors of unthankfulness will vanish, like fog before the western breeze, and the rising sun.

3. Cultivate a cheerful spirit. Cheerfulness is the twin sister of gratitude. They are born together. They walk hand in hand through life, and the death of the one breaks the heart of the other. Gratitude is the homage which the heart gives to God for his goodness. Cheerfulness is the external manifestation of this praise. And yet what a world is this, of downcast looks, and dejected hearts. Said a young man, as he witnessed the incessant murmurings, and fault finding of a pious mother, "if this is religion, the less I have of it the better." Probably thousands of mothers, have passed years of anxious prayer for the conversion of their children, and yet have been effectually preventing their conversion by the practical exhibition of an unamiable or melancholy spirit. The mother will, perhaps, force a stranger smile upon her cheek to greet a visitor in the parlor, but the smile is as transient as the visit, and her face is soon again shrouded in its accustomed gloom. The husband, comes home from his office or his store, perplexed with care, and almost the first sounds which greet his ears, are the words of

complaint. Disgusted with the sound, he is almost tempted to shut the door, and go back again to his business. He however takes his seat and waits for tea, with feelings in that irritable state which the least vexation will inflame. Soon his wife comes in, from the scene of her petulance, harassed with domestic vexations. Now here is the gunpowder, and the spark brought near together, and in all probability before the supper hour has passed away, there is an explosion. Painful as it is to describe such scenes, who does not know that they are of frequent occurrence. After tea, the husband, disappointed in finding happiness at home, sallies out in pursuit of enjoyment, to the music club, or the caucus, or the card table. He rapidly forms associates, and acquires a relish for dissipated pleasures, and in a few years, fails in business, and totters along the drunkard's path to ruin. Now it is this petulant and yet possibly pious wife, who is the cause of the family ruin. And in the providence of God, most awfully does she suffer for her sin. Such cases, are too numerous to be numbered. Every individual who has watched the progress of human woe, with an observant eye, can point you to many such wrecks. The world is full of them. Perhaps the husband has too much self control, to surrender himself up to the drunkard's doom,

and merely leaves his wife in solitude, at home, while he goes elsewhere to find his joys. She feels all the pangs of a broken heart, in perceiving that she has lost her husband's affections. She knows that he once loved her; and she weeps most bitterly as she feels assured that he loves her no more. Perhaps she does not even imagine the reason why. Unhappy wife! the fault is your own. When wearied and excited by the harassments of the day, your husband has returned to his home, he has not been met with a smile of welcome, and a placid heart. The parlor is in a clutter, the children are neglected, his wife is fretful. Love, even the most pure, and the most fervent, can not long survive such encounters. The tavern keeper will bid him welcome. He will have the little snug parlor, for the whist party, neat and in order, and his associates will be careful to avoid offence. They will greet him with the open hand, and the smiling brow. Is it strange, that a man, who is not governed by Christian principle, should under such circumstances, forget his wife and forsake his home? Is it strange, that he should love those who are careful to minister to his pleasures? And can it be supposed that the prayers of such a wife, for the conversion of her husband, will be answered, when the influence of her cherished feelings, is

to repel him from her presence and drive him from his home. It is sad to think how many pious wives, have thus been the most formidable obstacle in the way of their husband's conversion. The practical exemplification of religion, which the husband continually witnesses at home, has disarmed his conscience of its power, and paralyzed all other good influences. It has even excited his disgust to the religion she professes, shielded him against the appeals of the pulpit, and destroyed the influence which the example of irreproachable christians would otherwise have exerted upon his heart.

But look at the moral power of a cheerful and contented mind. The husband, sees his wife moving about the house, serene and happy. She is faithful in the discharge of all her duties, she will not allow her feelings to be irritated, by the annoyances of unfaithful domestics. He passes through the kitchen, and finds that the same religion which makes her cheerful in the parlor, controls her feelings there. The smile is there upon her countenance, and good nature animates her heart. My dear wife, he says, is almost an angel. Oh that I had such control over my feelings, as she has over hers. Molested as she is, altogether beyond my power of endurance, by the carelessness and unfaithfulness of those she employs, she is still always calm

and mild and happy. There must indeed be a reality in that religion, which makes her so perfect. He comes home at night, worn down with the toil of the day, and a cheerful room, and a cheerful heart embrace him. His troubled spirit is soothed by the quiet influences which she throws around him. Perhaps he is naturally a passionate man, and comes home vexed and petulant. But the neat fire side, the pleasant table, the peaceful home, the soothing tones of his wife's voice, calm his perturbed spirit. He feels that home is indeed a blessed retreat from the turmoil of business, and he will not leave it, till duty compels him forth. Occasionally his wife improves a favorable moment kindly to urge the duties of religion. He feels the power of her persuasion, for her whole life is a most convincing comment upon the truth, and the value of her principles. He goes to church, and hears the minister preach upon the loveliness of piety! Ah! he says, I have a still more eloquent, and convincing sermon, preached to me every day, and every hour, at home, by the example of my beloved wife. Yes! if any one is inexcusable in not being a christian, it is surely I. God has sent to me, the combined influence of precept and example.

Christian wife! this is the way to adorn the Gospel of your God and Savior. In any other

way, you are dishonoring religion, and driving your husband and your children far from God. Say not that human nature can not bear the vexations which you at times are compelled to encounter. Regenerated human nature *must* patiently and cheerfully bear any burden God is pleased to lay upon it. She who wears a clouded brow, and indulges despondency in her heart, is dishonoring religion, is degrading and souring her own feelings; she is embittering the joys of home, and preparing sorrow for herself, and ruin for her family. These are woes which are real. They will be found far less endurable, than the ordinary vexations of domestic life. God sends the petty trials of life, for wise purposes. The heart needs such discipline. Does God ask you to be submissive, when your child is struggling in the arms of death,—when all your husband's earthly possessions have taken to themselves wings, and flown away,—when you are prostrated upon a bed of weakness and pain, or are going down to the grave, with a disconsolate husband and weeping children to mourn your loss? Does he under these circumstances call for the exercise of a pious and submissive heart, and yet not require of you to manifest resignation, under smaller troubles—to recognize His providence in each minute event of life?

Again we say, think not that this subject is undignified,—too trivial for attention. It takes hold upon your spiritual welfare; it embraces the eternal interests of your family; it reaches forward in its influence through all coming time, and even during eternity. Cultivate a cheerful heart; at all times contented and cheerful. Guard against a fretful word, as you would guard against infection.

It was once said of a gentleman, who had rode over the seas of a stormy life, with a mind ever tranquil, and cheerful, "he has a decided talent at being happy." This undisturbed cheerfulness is indeed a talent, but it is in a great degree, an acquired talent. After making any allowance we please, for indifference of natural disposition, it is an incontestible fact that the most good humored man, may by indulging in passionate propensities become peevish and morose. And he whose natural temperament, is at the farthest remove from amiability, may, by continued efforts in restraining petulance and cultivating tranquillity, become a pattern of moral loveliness.

He, who has acquired this mastery over his own spirit, possesses that which is of more value than houses, or lands. He has a treasure inestimably precious, locked up in the strong holds of his own heart, secure from moth and thief,

and rust; a treasure which enriches poverty, invigorates weakness, and disarms affliction and pain; a treasure which is valuable in death, and which one can carry with him, to be his companion, and friend, through eternity. Who will not strive for the acquisition of this treasure. It is indeed a pearl of great price. And who is willing that the evil spirit of moroseness, and petulance should rule in his heart, and scourge him unceasingly with its scorpion lash? Go then to God, and present to Him a penitent, reconciled, submissive spirit. Attaining the consciousness that you are at peace with Him, through Jesus Christ,

> Let not a wave of trouble roll
> Across your peaceful breast.

4. Cultivate an affectionate spirit. We sometimes meet with men, who seem to think that any indulgence in affectionate feelings is a weakness. They will return from a journey, and greet their families with distant dignity, and move among their children, with the cold and lofty splendor of an iceberg, surrounded with its broken fragments. There is hardly a more unnatural sight on earth, than one of these families without hearts. The children, who are reared in such families, are usually moral deformities. They are but half human.

They have understanding without affections. And when they leave home, if a place without a heart, may be called by this sacred name, they enter upon life, exposed to all its dangers, and deprived of one of the most effectual shields to temptation, and guides to virtue.

A Father had better extinguish his boy's eyes, than take away his heart. Who that has experienced the joys of friendship, and knows the worth of sympathy, and affection, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery, than be robbed of the hidden treasures of his heart? Who would not rather bury his wife, than bury his love for her? Who would not rather follow his child to the grave, than entomb his parental affection? Yes! God has a heart; and He *loves, tenderly loves* His children. Jesus Christ has a heart, so warm and fervent, that he could die upon the cross, to save the unworthy, whom He loved. Love is Heaven's element, and the joys of affection—of congenial spirits, are the joys which animate the songs and inspire the harps of that blest world. Whatever else man may be robbed of, oh leave him his heart. Without this, he is a human hyena, unfit for earth or Heaven.

Cherish then your heart's best affections. Indulge in the warm and gushing emotions of filial, parental, fraternal love. Think it not a weak-

ness. God has the largest, and the warmest heart in the Universe. He is all heart. *God is love.* Fear not then to enlarge your heart's capacities, to give vigor to its exercises. Love as extensively, and as intensely as you can. Love God. Love every body, and every thing, that is lovely. Teach your children to love; to love the rose, to love the robin, to love their parents, to love their God. Let it be the studied object of your domestic culture, to give them warm hearts, ardent affections. Bind your whole family together, by these strong cords. You cannot make them too numerous. You cannot make them too strong. Religion is love;—love to God—love to man. And he who has no heart can no more be a christian; can no more be admitted to heaven, than a Bengal Tiger.

You can train up your family to be affectionate, or heartless. You can cultivate in your own bosom, general feelings of indifference, or sympathy and kindness. You see a child crying in the street. It has encountered some childish wo, which is, at the moment, crushing its little heart. Go to the sobbing sufferer, place your hand upon his head, and speak to him in kindness, and you will soothe his sorrows, and warm your own heart. Accustom yourself, to sympathise with sorrow, and suffering wherever they are seen, in man or brute. Disdain not to give

a moment's care, to the wounded bird, that flutters across your path. Cherish such feelings towards all God's creation, that if the bird's could speak, every songster of the forest, would regale you with notes of love, and welcome, that every insect would give its joyful chirp, and every beast of the field, would gambol with pleasure at your presence. Never forget that you have a heart to be cultivated; that its affections must be called into exercise, by all those appropriate stimulants, with which God has surrounded it. Thus you will advance in the scale of moral excellence, and by so doing will not only accumulate treasures of happiness, but increase your capabilities for future acquisitions. In your own heart, you will then have a portion of the spirit of heaven. In your own affectionate family, where heart is bound to heart by the tenderest ties, you will have a foretaste, of the unceasing bliss of the celestial home.

Thus will you adorn the gospel of Christ, and exhibit it to man in its heaven-born loveliness. Thus will you disarm the sinner of prejudice, and allure him to the joys of piety. A young lady, who had long resisted all the warnings of the bible, and compunctions of conscience, and appeals of the pulpit, went to pass a few days in a family over which religion had shed its hallowed influence of cheerfulness and affection.

And as she witnessed the calm joy, which beamed upon their mornings, and gilded the gliding hours of the evening, as she witnessed the mutual attachment, strengthened by unnumbered acts of kindness, and enlivened by the anticipations of a better home on high; her heart was touched with the consciousness, of the utter emptiness, and heartlessness of her own joys. She was thus led to reflect, till convinced of sin, she was guided to the Savior, and found that wisdom's ways are indeed ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. There was a silent influence in the happy piety of this family, which was irresistible, and which brought her in submission to the feet of Jesus. So shall we ever find it. There is no appeal to the heart, so persuasive, as a practical exhibition of the loveliness of piety. In comparison with such an appeal, every other sinks into almost total impotency. Indeed all other motives combined, hardly possess a power so efficacious. He who in his life exhibits the principles of the gospel, who shows by his daily conduct, the character which christianity would form, in all its nobleness, its generosity, its amiableness, and its integrity, is indeed a burning and a shining light. He illumines with a lustre which nothing can dim. He does more to silence the cavils of the gainsayer, and to bring conviction to the

mind of the sceptic, than volumes of unanswerable argument. Mother, would you have your child a christian? Shew him every day, and every hour, by your life, what religion is. Let him see that it controls your passions, that it cheers your spirits, that it warms, and animates your affections. Reader are you mourning over the thoughtlessness of any friend? Your most effectual appeal to him will be, the submission of your spirit, the warmth and fervor of your heart. Urge him to become a christian, by the exhibition of your happy and blameless life. Persuade him to become a follower of Christ, by your kindness, your disinterestedness, your social benevolence, your conscientious avoidance of every appearance of evil. But if you are petulant in your habits, dissatisfied and complaining in disposition, oh do not by verbal appeals, increase the disgust, with which you have already inspired your friend, against the religion you profess.

5. Let not the attainment of happiness be your direct object. Happiness is seldom found when it is the direct object of search. When we relinquish its pursuit, and endeavor to serve God, because He is our friend, and we love Him and ought to serve Him, then it is that we find happiness the unfailing companion of duty. The parent who walks the chamber, during the long and weary hours of the night, soothing his

sick, and suffering child, does not do this to promote his own happiness. He forgets himself, in his love for the sufferer. And yet it cannot be doubted that, constituted as he is, under these circumstances, he cannot pass the night so pleasantly, in any other way. When a friend urges him to retire to a distant apartment to sleep, he says, "No! I should be very unhappy to leave my child in such a state." And yet when he watches through the long night, with the child, it is not that he may make himself happy. He forgets himself, and his whole soul is engrossed, not with the desire of receiving enjoyment, but of communicating it. And it is the exercise of this benevolence, going out from self, which constitutes his happiness.

God, in his wisdom has so framed us, that the path of duty is always the path of enjoyment; and we should walk in that path, not because it is the way to be happy, but because it is right in the sight of God. Forget self. Look away from personal interest, and try to do good and to live a holy life, *that you may please God.* Let the prominent object in your mind ever be, obedience to the will of your Maker. Let that be the final, the efficient motive in all your actions.

One cold wintry day, tidings came to an affectionate daughter, that her Father was at the

point of death. He was thirty miles from her. The sun was already sinking behind the hills, and the air was filled with the snow, whirled by the fierce blast. But she immediately left her warm fire, and entering a sleigh with a little child for her driver, faced the cold fury of the tempestuous night. Hour after hour, they toiled their weary way, through wind and snow, till the first grey tints of the morning, found her at the bedside of the dying.

Now was this daughter, in this act of filial duty, actuated by selfish considerations. Did she stop to consult for her own happiness, and carefully to decide, whether that would be most promoted by remaining in quietude at her cheerful fireside, or by exposing herself to the wintry blast. No! She said, my dear father is dying, and I must go to see him. She thought not of self, of happiness. She thought only of her dying father, and was impelled by her affection for him, to encounter any dangers, and any sufferings, that she might soothe his last moments.

And yet it is unquestionably true that, with the affections which God had given her, she could have pursued no other course which would have been so promotive of her own happiness. Had she shrunk from exposure, and remained at home, a remorseful conscience, would

have disquieted her, and, for the remainder of life, she would have reflected upon herself, for a neglect of filial duty. Now the retrospect of that midnight ride must ever cheer her mind, with reflections pleasing, though pensive. Whenever the image of her departed father is called up in her memory, it must awaken pleasurable emotions.

It is this desire to do our duty; it is this strong and impelling affection, which should ever animate us. Feeling that God is our Father, and our friend, we should be willing to do any thing, and suffer any thing, which will afford Him gratification. We should do this, because we love Him. Then will happiness come unsought. She will remain with us an unfailing companion, accompanying us in our future flight to a better world.

Upon this subject, there is no occasion to perplex the mind, with subtle speculation. The duties which God enjoins upon us, are all plain to common sense. Every one understands what it is, to forget selfish gratification, out of regard to the welfare of others. And this is the spirit, which christianity inculcates. Let us love and obey God, because he is worthy of all love, and obedience. Let us be kind to our fellow creatures, and be ready to sacrifice our own convenience, to promote their happiness, because this

is well pleasing to their Father, and our Father. Let us do this, and we shall have that approbation of conscience, and favor of God which secures to ourselves, here on earth, the highest degree of happiness consistent with the condition of man, and prepares us for unfailing and unalloyed enjoyment forever.

6. Cultivate decision of character. There is a trait of character, which not unfrequently falls under our observation called stubbornness, or obstinacy. It is a degrading principle, founded in ignorance. The vilest, the most abandoned of our species exhibit it in its rankest virulence. It has no ear for the voice of reason. It has no heart for the persuasions of friendship. It is a kind of swinish instinct. A genuinely obstinate man, is beyond the influence of moral suasion. Upon the veriest trifles he is inflexible. He will have his own way, however unimportant it may be, or however much it may incommode others. He shuts his eyes and rushes on. He closes his ear and presses forward, and whether right or wrong it matters not. A more stupid, degrading, odious state of mind, can hardly be witnessed.

True decision is as distinct from stubbornness as light is from darkness. Decision is founded upon knowledge; it is guided by enlightened reason. When duty does not forbid,

it is as yielding as the air; the slightest wishes of a friend may bend it; it will even anticipate a friend's desires and gladly yield to afford gratification. But when duty is concerned—when conscience speaks with her imperious voice, the everlasting hills are not more immovable. No blandishments can entice; no threats can intimidate. A world in arms cannot change the inflexible purpose of the soul. It can no more be moved by the opposition or the ridicule of man, than the sun in the Heavens by the fogs of earth. True decision is guided by reason; its eye is ever open; its ear catches every passing sound, its heart is tender; and thus it acts, mildly, yet firmly, under all the light and all the knowledge which can be obtained.

This decision is a principle which piety inculcates and strengthens. Though it may exist in very different degrees of strength in individual bosoms it is absolutely essential to christian character. With some it seems to be a natural trait, appearing in infancy and growing with their growth. With others it is, apparently, altogether acquired. But whether natural or acquired it is inseparable from Christian usefulness and happiness.

Look at the condition of the Christian and see how essential it is, that this governing principle should animate him. He is in a world

where ten thousand allurements are drawing him away from the path of duty. Gaiety comes and, with winning smiles, and courtly speech and flattering protestations of friendship, strives to lure him to her luxuriant and dissipated bowers. Wealth appears, with her glitter, and strives to dazzle the eye, and to seduce the heart. Scorn comes, with sneering lip, and scowling brow, and stands in the Christian's path, endeavoring to make him ashamed to walk in that unfrequented way. Fear meets him, with pallid cheek and trembling limbs, to tell him how rugged the hill, how dark the night, and how dreadfully the lions roar in the path. And Indolence presents her stupifying drugs, that he may be enticed to slumber and perish. Now how can the Christian overcome these, and innumerable other adversaries, if his spirit is as fluctuating as the wind? How can he reach his journey's end, if he yield to the allurements of gaiety, and pursue the phantoms of wealth, and shrink before the sneers of scorn, and recoil at the suggestions of fear, and sink down into inglorious repose, when indolence, with drawling speech and drowsy eye, entices him to her couch? No! there must be decision animating the pilgrim in his progress, or he never,—never can surmount the dangers and the temptations of the way. As a ship buffets

the waves of the ocean, keeping a steady course to its destined, haven, taking advantage of winds apparently adverse, and never veering from its true course, unless compelled by uncontrollable necessity,—so is the Christian required steadily to fix his eye on Heaven; to meet the storms and tempests of life without turning from his purpose; to press onward whether friends encourage or foes assail. He is to go right onward, in the path of duty, leaving the consequences with God. If poverty, if contempt, if alienation of friends, if death be the result, he is not to shrink; he is not to be intimidated. Calmly, kindly and firmly, he is to do his duty. No matter how great the sacrifice; if it be like plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right arm it must be done.

If a daughter must thus be debarred from her paternal home, and turned houseless and friendless upon the world; if a wife must thus lose a husband's affections, and even awaken bitterness in the bosom where love once dwelt; if a son must inherit a Father's displeasure, instead of his benediction, by acknowledging the Savior and walking in the paths of piety, it must be done. "Whosoever," saith Christ, "loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." If in consequence of Christian decision we should be led to the stake, as has already

been the case with innumerable martyrs, we must not swerve from duty. He who would thus save his life, must lose it eternally.

There is hardly any person more universally disdained, than one who is so cowardly or unstable as not to live consistently with his avowed opinions. Such a man's character is at the mercy of other's. Or rather he has no character of his own. He goes where he is led. He follows the crowd, unwilling to incur the singularity of turning from the beaten track. He is like a feather upon the waters, tossed by every wave, blown by every wind. Such a man, if a professor of religion, is continually dishonoring the cause of his Master. He is literally all things to all men. He will go to a church upon the sabbath, where he does not believe that the gospel is preached, and while he thinks that he is conciliating esteem, he is securing the contempt of every intelligent man. With the worldly and the gay, he will countenance scenes of amusement, which his judgment condemns, and will try to appease the reproaches of conscience by fancying that he is thus disarming prejudice and gaining an influence, which he will afterwards use to some good purpose. But, in heart, he knows that it is wretched imbecility that governs him. Who can respect a man, who does not live consistently with his opinions?

Who does not more highly esteem an honest, candid, manly opponent, than a man of such pusilanimity of spirit that he is afraid to avow himself as either a friend or a foe?

We have heard of a man who fell into the water, and was near being drowned. As his loud outcries brought many to the shore to witness his struggles, they were astonished to hear him screaming in a voice of terror, "good God, good devil, good God, good devil." He was, however, at length, rescued from the waves and brought to the shore. When his friends inquired the reason for such singular exclamations, he replied, "I knew not into whose hands I should fall, and I wanted to make peace with both." There are many such persons in the world, who are every day, and every hour of their lives, practically exclaiming, "good God, good devil." Such a person must be ever miserrable. He must feel that he deserves contempt.

If we would be happy, we must have a peaceful conscience. And unless we have, in some degree, at least, the spirit of Christ, we must ever feel the reproaches of that faithful monitor. How manifestly was He superior to all earthly temptations. What threats could intimidate Him? What terrors could cause Him to abandon duty? What fascinations could allure Him into the paths of sinful pleasures? What pros-

pect of worldly emolument could induce Him to lay aside His self denial, and relinquish His benevolent efforts. He had the same serene, and settled purpose of soul, when the multitude cried Hosannah, as when crucify him, was mingled with their imprecations. With a spirit humble, affectionate, obliging and childlike, there was a decision, "stable as the pillared firmament." Poverty,—reproach,—death moved Him no more, than the slightest zephyrs which fanned His houseless head.

If you would be useful, decision must be with you a cardinal virtue. If you would have peace of mind in this world, and be happy in the world to come, you must be consistent and decided.

Ever bear in mind that

> Happiness must have her seat,
> And centre in the breast.

The politician can not find it in gratified ambition, the merchant can not find it in increasing wealth; the devotee of pleasure can not find it in the giddy rounds of gaiety. The fountains must be opened in our own hearts, by cherishing those feelings and affections, which God has enjoined.

> "He's not the Happy Man, to whom is given
> A plenteous fortune by indulgent Heaven;
> Whose gilded roofs on shining columns rise,
> And painted walls enchant the gazer's eyes.

When yielding crowds attend, and pleasure serves
While youth and health and vigor string his nerves.
Even not all these in one rich lot combin'd,
Can make the happy man, without the mind;
Where social love exerts her soft command,
And plays the passions with a tender hand,
Whence every virtue flows, in rival strife,
And all the moral harmony of life."

CHAPTER III.

THE FAMILY.

If there are any joys on earth, which harmonize with those of heaven, they are the joys of a christian family. When the snow flakes fall fast in the wintry evening, and the moaning winds struggle at the windows, what is so delightful as to see the happy little ones, sporting around the blazing fire. Look at that little creature in her night dress, frolicking, and laughing, as though she had never known, and never would know a care. Now she rolls upon the carpet; now she climbs the chair, and now she pursues her older sister around the room, while her little heart is overflowingly full of happiness. Who does not covet the pleasurable emotions with which the parents look upon this lovely scene?

But with these joys, are associated responsibilities. All the inmates of this family are immortal. This home of their childhood must be

either the nursery of heaven, or the broad gate of destruction. These infant prattlers are acquiring feelings and habits, which are to control them through life and to guide their destinies forever. How necessary then, that purifying influences should surround them in their early home! How important the duties, devolving upon those who have the control of the family! How soon will this household be scattered! This little boy now so timid, and susceptible to every impression, may soon be breasting the storms of a distant ocean, or controlling the decisions of justice and law, or mingling in the angry conflict of armies. He may be honored for his virtues and his influence, or be an outlaw, pursued by justice, and the hopeless victim of wretchedness and crime. He must soon struggle in the embrace of death, and his spirit go to other worlds, to range infinite space, to exist through endless ages, to be a happy associate with adoring angels, or leagued in rebellion, to wage dreadful and eternal warfare, against the government of God. This little girl may live to be in her turn the happy parent, rejoicing in the opening virtues, and increasing love, of her children, or a wretched outcast, strolling in shame, a disgrace to herself, her friends, and her sex. She may go down to the grave burd-

ened with sins, which will sink her to the deepest abyss of the sinner's gloom.

How many parents have found life cheered by the virtues of their children; have had all life's blessings multiplied, and every individual blessing magnified, by the affection of those, whom they have nurtured to virtue. Even the joys of youth, with its vigor and its ardent hopes, cannot sustain a comparison with those of venerable age, when surrounded with the reverence of children, and grand children. He who lives to a good old age, with passions subdued, and a mind disciplined to serenity, as he looks upon his grand children clambering upon his knee, or riding upon his cane, enjoys some of the most precious emotions of happiness, which this life affords.

But on the other hand, how many parents have wept in agony, that their children were ever born. How many have said, "oh that my child had died in the innocent hours of infancy, or that I had died before this dreadful day?" What scene of sorrow can earth afford, more affecting, than that of an aged parent, weeping over his ruined family, and going down with a broken heart to the grave.

Around the fireside they are probably acquiring unchanging characters, for good or ill. They will probably go on through time and through

eternity in that direction, upon which they enter during the first few years of life. The stamp is in your hand, with which to place upon their characters, that impress which never can be effaced. It is therefore almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of domestic influence.

1. *Family Prayer*, is an indispensable requisite in the promotion of domestic happiness. The man who neglects this duty, whatever may be his theoretical notions about religion, is a practical atheist. However loud may be his professions, his conduct refutes them all. It is totally absurd for one to pretend to the christian character, who is neglecting the practical duties of religion. It matters not how orthodox his creed; it matters not how ostentatious his zeal, if his heart does not impel him to gather his family around him, and to commend them, with himself, to the divine protection, it is certain, that he is a stranger to all the feelings of the renewed heart. If he is not allured to this exercise by his own desires; if he needs to be driven to it by authoritative commands; if he is looking about for excuses for forsaking God's altar, he has not that spirit which is essential to piety. The man who loves God, and is sensible of his dependance upon God, must feel, that hardly any earthly deprivation would be so great,

as the loss of the privilege of family worship. He is urged by the strong impulse of a grateful heart, to the morning and the evening altar. He is impelled by a sense of his own necessities and helplessness. He is allured by an attraction of love and reverence, which he can find no will to resist. He who is dragged reluctantly to the throne of grace, is the slave of sin. His heart must be wrong.

At this exercise all the members of the household should be assembled. If any individual is unwilling to recognize the existence, and the authority of God, by meeting with the family for prayer, such an one ought not to be allowed to remain an inmate, of a christian dwelling. It is vain here to plead conscientious scruples. A man may as well say, that he feels conscientiously bound, to go unwashed, or undressed, as to affirm that his conscience, will not let him unite in prayer to God. If an individual is found with an understanding, and a heart so perverted, the christian should have conscience enough to say, let him then go in peace, but I will not employ, in my family, one who interrupts its harmony, and injures the moral sense, of my children, by his wicked example. Let every man worship God, according to the dictates of his own conscience. Let religion in all its forms be as free as the mind. But let no one come and demand

employment and admission into a christian family, while denying and dishonoring the Creator of the world.

This subject is one which at the present time is of most momentous importance. Every day the emigrant's ship, is pouring thousands upon our shores, who are ignorant of the claims of God's law, and almost of their own immortality. They come strong in passion, but powerless in principle. They are capable of sweeping over our land, with the desolation of the whirlwind, and of prostrating our institutions before the lawless violence of the mob, or of becoming men of respectability, and of salutary influence. They are accompanied by professedly spiritual guides, who are deeply interested in excluding from their minds, all light and knowledge, which may tend to weaken the influence of a degrading superstition. Every avenue to their understanding is watched with an eagle eye, lest some enlightening truth, should find its way there, and reveal to them, the spiritual thraldom by which they have been defrauded. The hearing of a prayer offered to God, may rouse the soul from its degrading servitude, to spiritual freedom, and therefore is much influence exerted to prevent their being present at such prayers. This young girl, who lives in your family, with foreign accent and rude, uncultivated, yet, affec-

tionate feelings, will, probably, ere long, be the mother and instructress and guide of a numerous family. The only school she can enjoy, to prepare her for these responsible duties, is the few months she passes under your roof. Till she came to your dwelling she, perhaps, never heard the voice of sincere and heartfelt prayer, and when she leaves your dwelling, she may never hear that voice again. She has seen nothing of religion but ceremonial pomp. She knows nothing of her accountability to God. She has no conception of her own sinfulness, or of the way of salvation. God has placed her for a few months, under your influence, and what you do for her must be done quickly. To a great degree her own character, and that of her future children is dependent upon your exertions. Bring then every holy influence in your power, to bear upon her mind and her heart. And above all things, let her hear your confessions of sin, your acknowledgment of duty, and your prayer for heavenly guidance, and forgiveness.

You have a young man in your employ. He has just come from the ignorance, and the degradation of his foreign home, to seek his fortune in this new world. He is a stranger to our customs, and with an understanding totally uninstructed, is easily made the victim of the vicious, and the dupe of the designing. Soon he is to be

an American citizen; with all the rights; and all the political power, our free constitution gives. He is to help frame our laws, and choose our rulers. Soon he will leave your home, for a dwelling of his own, and his moral image, whether it be that of ignorance and vice, or intelligence and virtue, will be transmitted to perhaps a dozen children, inheriting the American's birthright. Not a few would gladly keep him in ignorance, and shut out from his soul, the light of true piety. God has placed him for a time under your tuition. He has given you a strong influence over his mind, and the most favorable opportunity for exerting that influence; and if you neglect the duty thus devolving upon you, you neglect one of the most important responsibilities of your life, and you cannot be held guiltless. Let him be in reality a member of your family; let him share in all the privileges, and all the purifying influences of your devotion. Perhaps the flame which warms your heart may be enkindled in his. The views of truth, which you express in prayer and praise, may communicate light to his mind, which in no other way can be imparted.

The foreign population now crowding to our shores, from which we have already experienced so many evils, and have so many still to apprehend, would soon be disarmed of all dangerous

power, were we to receive them with kindness and hospitality, and really to exert ourselves for their welfare. They are brought from countries of papal darkness, from associations of oppression, and from where the extreme of poverty secures its attendant calamities of intellectual and moral degradation. And there, in their penury, and in their mental and spiritual ignorance, fortified by the most powerful superstition, and with passions inflamed by the insane policy of civil and ecclesiastical governments, they are almost inaccessible by any moral influences. The christian Missionary can get no access to their dwellings, and far less can he get access to their hearts. The printed page they dare not receive; and if received, it conveys no ideas to their benighted minds.

Now God allures them away from these strong-holds of sin. He separates them from their associates, and brings them, as strangers, to this land of strangers. They come with friendly feelings, seeking a refuge. They are scattered throughout the country, and placed in the families of the intelligent, and the pious. It is indeed a peculiar providence, which is thus dividing this otherwise impregnable force of sin, and opening its ranks, and separating individual from individual, that the light of truth may, from every direction, beam in around them. It seems

as though God, by special design, had placed these strangers in our families, and dependant upon our kindness, that we might instil into their hearts christian principles and mould their characters aright. We should welcome them with the utmost cordiality, and manifest towards them untiring benevolence. Every family should receive with christian sympathy, all who are in its employ; and especially should that sympathy be manifested, by the assemblage of the whole household at family prayer. The soothing spirit of devotion is as oil to the wheels of domestic life. It tunes the otherwise discordant instrument, and sweetest harmony is the result. It tends to inspire each individual with fidelity to his maker and to his fellow men. It promotes temporal prosperity; and secures spiritual peace. It enlightens the understanding, and affects the heart.

The father who neglects the duty of family prayer, may just about as well say, *in words*, to his children, I do not believe that there is any reality in religion. They see that their father does not feel his dependance upon God; that he does not deem it necessary to pray to Him. Thus is God excluded from their hearts, and they are led by parental example, to prayerlessness and sin. A prayerless family, must be in the sight of God a hideous spectacle. God is

banished from his own dominions—from that spot which he blessed above all others, and where above all others, it is important that His authority should be recognised.

Judiciously conducted, family prayer is a constant appeal to the heart, and the consciences of children. It continually impresses upon their minds the sense of God's presence and their duty. It subdues the strength of evil passions, and fortifies them with correct principles. It enlightens their consciences, and thus restrains from sin. It acts upon the soul beneficially in every respect in which the soul can be benefitted. The young man who leaves such a parental roof, to encounter the temptations of life, is fortified by a strength of inward principle, which has been daily, and yearly accumulating, at the family altar. And when he hears the oath of his associate, he trembles. And when he sees the dissolute, going in the paths of sinful indulgence, he will not follow. The voice of a father's prayers is not forgotten. Its still and persuasive monitions, follow him through all the turmoil and thickening cares of life.

It is a sabbath morning in winter. The breakfast table is early removed, and the family are assembled around the blazing hearth. Father and mother, brothers and sisters, with others in the employment of the family, encircle the fire-

side. The Father has previously selected an interesting extract, from a religious paper, or book, which one of the older children reads. They then read in rotation from the Bible. The hymn is read, and infant voices rise sweetly, to the ear of God, mingling in the notes of family praise. They then bow in prayer. And as the father gives utterance to his feelings of penitence, and gratitude—as his heart grows warm with the glow of devotion, the whole household is impressed with a sense of the reality, and excellence of religion.

As the bell summons them to the church, they go with feelings prepared to be rightly affected by the preaching of the Gospel. As the minister pleads the cause of righteousness, and unfolds the scenes of a judgment to come, the truth descends with power, upon these hearts, disarmed and opened for its reception. Think you that this young man, who has just come from the bosom of a christian family, and from the warm utterance of a father's prayers, who has just been reading his bible, and uniting in the morning hymn of praise; whose affections are enlivened by the recent melody of the christian's song; think you that he can listen, as coldly and insensibly, to these appeals to his conscience and his heart, as can that young man by his side, who has never heard a father's prayers,

and who has perhaps, seldom seen his father even look into the word of God. No! while the one struggles in vain, to conceal his emotion, the other sleeps in unconcern. The one, in all human probability, will soon join the church of Christ here on earth, eventually to be a member of the church triumphant in the skies. The other will go on to live without God, and without God to die. Compare the records of our churches, with the secret history of families, and it will be found, that the children of prayer are pre-eminently those, who are gathered into the kingdom of God.

The impression, which is produced upon the mind, by the instructions of the sabbath, is strengthened by the home scenes of the week. After the exercises of the day are over, and the family is again assembled, in the silence of the evening, for the evening hymn and prayer, the emotions which the day has awakened, are increased in intensity, and the resolutions to which the day has given birth, are renewed by the humbled spirit. During all the week, each morning and evening, these impressions are revived till another sabbath comes, with its new energies of moral power.

A young man, who had recently become a Christian, was greatly tried upon this subject. He was a mechanic, of much intelligence, but

naturally diffident. A large number of young men, as journeymen and apprentices, many of them older than himself, boarded in his family. For a time he could not summon resolution to commence family prayer, before so numerous an audience, and as a substitute, had morning and evening prayers with his wife, in their chamber. But a voice within, continually reproached him with dereliction of duty. He could find no peace of mind. He was a stranger to spiritual enjoyment. Conscience told him that he was shrinking from the responsibilities of the Christian, through dread of the slighting remarks of his fellow creatures. He knew that the irreligious members of his family marked his neglect, and that they must feel that his profession was in vain. For many weeks he thus tampered with conscience, and with duty, and consequently, was a stranger to peace. At last he resolved that he would no longer be recreant to his Christian vows; that he would no longer refuse to discharge any duty, which God should see fit to place upon him.

As he met his numerous family of boarders, at the breakfast table, in the morning, he said to them, "My conscience has long been reproving me, for my neglect of family prayer. I have not felt able to summon courage, to lead in prayer, before so large a family as I have at

present. But I am satisfied that this timidity is sinful, and I cannot any longer neglect this duty. I shall hereafter have morning prayers, immediately after breakfast, and evening prayers at nine o'clock, and I should be happy to have all the members of the family, who feel willing, unite with us in the exercise." I believe no one left the room, as, at the close of the meal, he took the Bible and read a short passage of scripture, and all gave respectful attention, as he implored the presence, and blessing of God. And as he pronounced the word amen, the spiritual burden was rolled from his mind, and he found that the path of duty is the path of peace. Now this looks like consistent piety. The man who manifests this decision, must be useful, and cannot but be respected. The most bitter foe of religion, the most scornful caviler, cannot withhold admiration from the exhibition of humble, yet firm and consistent piety. And God has so formed our souls, that there is satisfaction and delight, in the consciousness of duty discharged.

The more numerous a family is, the more important it is; that its lawful head, should present the example of consistent, decided and unwavering piety. If thoughtless young men are members of the household, how important is it that they should witness the daily recognition

of God, and listen to the utterance of pious feelings. These are the moral conflicts in which the young soldier of the cross must engage. He is not called to charge in the face of glittering bayonets, and before the cannon's mouth. But he is often summoned to the exercise of courage, of far more difficult attainment. He must daily be animated by a spiritual boldness of nobler nature. There is no cowardice so inexcusable and fatal in its consequences, as that of the Christian. His conduct is watched with eagle eyes. His neglect of duty is carefully noted, by those around him. Some young wild fire, sarcastically says, "Our good master here, is truly a brave Christian! He does not fear God, half as much as he does us." What must be the influence of such impressions, upon the minds of the young and thoughtless.

2. Every parent should make the direct religious instruction of his family, an object of his care and efforts. There are not a few clergymen, eminent for piety, and extensive usefulness, who have been punished for their remissness in this duty, by the ruin of their children. The father goes into the study early in the morning. He is visiting his parishioners in the afternoon. In the evening he seeks repose from mental exhaustion by general reading, or is absent from home to attend a lecture. He can

find no time to devote to his children, and feels that it is some excuse, that his time and attention are entirely consecrated to christian usefulness. But God does not hold him guiltless. And he does not interfere with the established principles of moral influences, to accommodate the practices of this individual. Time rolls on. The son arrives at manhood, and the father advances to gray hairs. And now you witness the fearful consequences, which God has connected with this neglect. The son is ruined, and the father's heart is broken, and his mind prematurely impaired, by grief. He cannot soothe his troubled spirit, and he wears away the lingering years of old age, in almost unalleviated affliction. He reaps as he has sown. He has been laborious and faithful in his parochial duties, and consequently has secured to himself the respect, and attachment, which almost invariably are connected with a useful life. He has neglected his children, and consequently they bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. The few individual cases in which by some special providence this ruin is averted, form the exceptions, and not the rule. God has so invariably connected punishment with the neglect of these duties, as to leave no doubt upon the mind respecting His will. If God has entrusted to your keeping, an immortal spirit,

He expects that you will attend to that trust. You are to regard it, as your first duty, subordinate to no other. You have no right to take upon yourself any obligations, to church or state, which shall render it necessary for you practically to say to God, I have no time to devote to this immortal spirit, which you have entrusted to my guidance. That service, cannot be acceptable to God, which is at the expense of your parental obligations. God has never required such service, at your hands. A man may more reasonably leave his own family to starve, while wandering hither, and thither, to search out objects of charity, than leave his own children to spiritual poverty and death, while devoting his exclusive attention, to the lanes and the alleys, of a spiritually impoverished world. He thus neglects a greater duty for a less.

A clergyman is invited to take the agency of some religious society, which will render it necessary for him to spend most of his time away from home. He has several boys, just at that age, in which boys most demand a father's watchful care. Shall he leave them, to form their characters, without a Father's guidance, that he may engage in these distant duties? Many while feeling most deeply the sacrifice, have decided that it was a duty. But I must

think the decision is erroneous, and more than this, that the providence of God, has shewn us that it is wrong. We cannot conceive of a more sacred trust, than an immortal spirit, committed to our *special care*. And if we neglect this trust, *for any cause whatever*, we must expect to find ourselves, in conflict with the principles of God's government.

Look at the sons of the wealthy, and the eminent. How few surmount temptation, and live to be an honor to their parents. What is professional celebrity, what are a few thousands of dollars in comparison, with a son of elevated moral worth? What can so cheer us, in life's declining years, as the virtues of our children? What legacy can a good man leave the world to be compared in value with a son or daughter, with warm affections and powerful mind, consecrated to the service of God?

Many fathers appear to think that the religious instruction of the children devolves exclusively upon the mother. They act upon this principle. If God so regarded it, He would, in justice order that the consequences of their ruin should fall upon the mother alone. God has, by connecting both parents in the penalty of the neglect, shewn that the responsibility is equally divided. The father who does not pray with his children; who does not with his own lips

guide their infant affections to the Savior; who does not give time and thought to their mental and moral culture, must expect that the displeasure of God will meet him, embittering his declining days and almost destroying the anticipations of joy in Heaven. How many dreadful facts might in this connection be narrated, which would cause even the ears of them that hear to tingle. I write now, with a mind oppressed by the recent intelligence of such a case, awful to the parents beyond every hope of earthly consolation;—and a case in which the ruin of a talented son and only child, is almost directly traceable to the inconsistency of a professedly christian father.

3. Be tolerant to the religious views of the different members of your family. The religious community is divided into various denominations all assuming the name of christians. It often happens that a family is unfortunately divided in their religious sentiments. The husband is perhaps a Congregationalist. The wife feels conscientiously bound to unite with the Methodists. The daughter thinks that she shall sin against scripture and conscience, if she does not, by immersion, enter a Baptist church. It is indeed unfortunate that a family, otherwise living so happily together, should be thus divided. And any sacrifice, but the sacrifice of principle,

should be made, rather than have such divisions exist. It is a melancholy spectacle to see father and mother, brothers and sisters, separating upon the Sabbath unable to go to the house of God in company. Still in the present state of the world such cases must occur. There will be in the same family, the converted and the unconverted, the disciples of the Savior and the votaries of the world. Christian principle will compel to separation. And thus will opposition to pure religion, "set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." We are taught in the Bible to expect such trials, and God alone can comfort us under them. But we must ever remember that the Savior has said, "he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Afflicted christian! the day is near when all tears will be wiped from your eyes. Let this thought cheer you, and you will find the path of duty, even though painful, the path of peace.

Each family is in itself an independent empire, of which the father is the law-giver and the monarch. He has power to oppress his wife. He has power to oppress his child. The arm of the state cannot be thrust in, and the cry of op-

pression may not come out. The relation between parent and child is such, that it is the parent's duty, for many years, to secure the strict obedience of the child. He is to instruct his child in religion, and is to *enforce* if necessary, his attendance upon all those means of instruction, which the parent thinks proper. But when that child's mind has arrived at such a degree of maturity that it is capable of judging for itself; when that child intelligently adopts its religious belief, sensible of its accountability to God, then farther restraint is persecution. It is the exercise of precisely the same spirit which led to the "act of uniformity," and the "test act," and all the outrages of the "court of high commission."

If the wife be not permitted to worship God as she pleases, her liberty of conscience is destroyed. She is persecuted. What does religious liberty mean? Simply that *men* may worship God as their consciences dictate, and that women have no rights of conscience. It is a Mahomedan doctrine that women have no souls, and from the conduct of some husbands, we fear it may be inferred that it is a Christian doctrine also. If you compel your wife to attend a form of worship in which she cannot unite, or if you attempt to harass or obstruct her in that form of worship which she deems proper, you are ex-

ercising an intolerance as relentless as that which erected the Spanish inquisition, and kindled the fires of Smithfield. It is feared that developments might be made, which would show that even in this free country, the persecuting spirit of papacy is not dead. It is feared that there is many a lady in our land, now groaning under religious bondage. She has no recognised religious rights. She is the bond slave of her husband; and she is compelled to follow him to the temple he frequents, be it ever so obnoxious to her own conscience, and repugnant to her own feelings. Can that mind be liberalized by learning, can that heart be subdued by piety, which, under all the light of the present day, can perpetrate such outrages against the religious liberty of a fellow immortal? The man who will not tolerate religious liberty in his family, wants but the power to crush the spirit of free inquiry in the state. He who will make the companion of his life the miserable victim of religious persecution, would surely feel less reluctance to wield this oppressive power over the consciences of others. Toleration, like charity, should begin at home.

Have respect for the conscientious scruples of your wife and your child, who has arrived at years of discretion and responsibility. Let them be Catholic or Protestant, Episcopalian or Con-

gregationalist. Unfortunate as it may be for your domestic interests to have this division in your family, intolerance will greatly increase the evil. Do not tyrannize over the free spirits of your family. He can lay no claim to be the friend of civil or religious liberty, who is the spiritual oppressor of his own household; who resolves that his mind and his religion shall be the mind and the religion of one and all; who sits at his own fireside, in the papal chair, and there rules with the intolerant spirit of the church of Rome. He who truly loves religious liberty, will love to feel that his family is free; and he never will thunder parental anathemas against the son or the daughter who exercises this inalienable right of every immortal being.

4. The Christian should make it an object of special attention to promote the immediate temporal happiness of his family. The man who has too much dignity to play with his children; who can look coldly and distantly upon their sports in the yard; who takes no interest in their wagons and their sleds; who will not lend them an encouraging smile, in building a rabbit warren, or a dove cote, disgraces the name of father. A snow drift must have a warmer heart than he. May God preserve children from such fathers. In no way can we so surely get the affections of our children, and an

unbounded influence over their minds, as by manifesting a personal interest in their enjoyments. The fulness of their grateful hearts will flow out to those who sympathize in their sports adapted to their youthful years. It is an important part of religion, to try to promote happiness whenever and wherever we can. Said John Newton, "I see in this world two heaps, one of happiness, and one of misery; now if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap, and add to the other, I carry a point. If, as I go home, a child has dropped a half penny, and if, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel that I have done something. I should be glad indeed to do greater things, but I will not neglect this." It is a noble sentiment,—worthy of the great and good man by whom it was uttered. The practice of this sentiment would be a greater blessing to the world, than the enforcement of any code of laws the human mind ever framed. Let the parent act upon this principle in his family; let him engage in the evening sport; let him plan the morning walk; let him never plead that most miserable of all earthly excuses, *want of time;* let him form such habits, that his children shall ever greet him as their best playmate, as their warmest friend. Thus let him exemplify the kindly and benevolent spirit of christianity. Let him exhibit that spirit to his chil-

dren, in its real aspect of cheerfulness and joy. The few moments each day appropriated to this duty, will bring in a rich income of family prosperity and happiness. It will contribute more to the enjoyment of life, yes, infinitely more, than any accumulation of wealth which could have been secured in the same time. And when such a father dies, he leaves his children in possession of virtues and sources of enjoyment, for the loss of which no money could compensate.

5. Take an interest in their studies. Send them into the yard to collect the different varieties of blades of grass, or into the garden to gather specimens of leaves, from the apple, the peach, the plum, and the currant; or to the bank of the river, or the shore of the ocean, to notice the varieties of stones. Thus, while interesting their minds in the highest degree, you may excite habits of observation, which may be of inestimable value in all future life.

Tell an interesting story to one, to be repeated by him to another. Thus may memory be early strengthened, and habits of close attention be acquired. By inquiring respecting the studies at school, or drawing from a youthful reader a narration of the contents of an entertaining book, the all important habit of mental application must be confirmed.

At times reason with them, guarding carefully against obscure statements and complicated arguments. Thus may the mind be early accustomed to logical deductions, and the powers of reasoning be strengthened. It is generally by some accidental occurrence, leading to habits of diligent application, that the mind begins to develope its energies. A taste is thus early acquired for some pursuit, which results in the distinguished cultivation of the mental powers. The little brass cannon of Napoleon's childhood not improbably formed his infant genius for the carnage of Lodi and Austerlitz.

But I need not longer dwell upon such points as these. Let the parent distinctly understand the nature of his parental obligations; let his heart be warmly interested in promoting the future welfare and the immediate happiness of his family, and he will find every hour rich with the opportunities for the exercise of these pure affections. He will be binding moral influences about the hearts of his children, which will cling to them through all the temptations and solicitudes of life. He will be drawing their affections to himself, and getting an influence over their minds, which neither time nor space can destroy. And when he sits in the arm-chair of the old man, or walks in the tottering steps of venerable age, he will look with emo-

tions of happiness, which no language can describe, upon his grateful sons and daughters, who encircle him with their love, and who vie with each other in the duties of filial affection. Who would not be such a father? And is not this the path of peace? Is not this the way to live and be happy? What does such a man want of the bowling alley and the billiard room? What charms can wine and cards afford, to lure him from these enjoyments of his favored home? Can any one imagine that he, by conforming to the instructions of God, is making a sacrifice of his earthly happiness? that, by forsaking haunts of dissipation and scenes of revelry, he is clouding life with gloom? No! Godliness has promise of the life that *now is*, as well as of that *which is to come*. Obedience to the law of God fills heaven with rapture. Obedience to the principles of His government has the same tendency here on earth. God, who loves to see his creatures happy, has given us instructions to guide to happiness; and the closer we follow his guidance, the more abundant and unfailing will be our joy. There never was a more miserable mistake—not to say atrocious sin—than to suppose that wisdom's ways are ways of *misery*, and all her paths, paths of *gloom*. In every period of life, whether that of youth, maturity, or old age; in every relation which can here exist,

whether that of children, parents, or citizens; in every condition allotted to humanity, whether that of poverty, or riches, obscurity or honor, it will be found that conformity to the moral government of God always tends to happiness; while want of conformity to that government, ensures moral discord; increasing to the despairing cry of the dying sinner, and the wailing of the lost.

Look at this man, who makes his home but a boarding house, where he may eat and sleep. His wife is merely his house-keeper. His children are necessary evils, to be kept out of the way as much as possible. To-day he is at the bowling alley. To-morrow he is at the billiard room. And the next day he is, till midnight, at the whist party. He is a jovial companion, and greets his associates with an air of careless mirth, as though he never knew a sorrow. But in truth, he is a poor pitiable victim of disquietude and depression. His jokes are forced. His smile is unnatural. It is even by constraint that he retains the semblance of good nature. See him at home—how petulant and irascible! The least annoyance is, to his mind, like the spark to the powder. His children, while they flee from his frown, imbibe his spirit. See him, as he rises in the morning, gloomy and cross. The poor creature hardly knows the meaning of the word enjoyment. This is a man of pleasure!

He will not obey God's law, because it will disturb his happiness! Wretched man! He is the victim of his own sins. He is serving Satan here, and Satan rewards him, as he does all his disciples, with the painfully forced semblance of joy, but with an harassed spirit, and prospective destruction.

Lord Chesterfield was such a man. He spent his whole life in the vain pursuit of pleasure, and yet happiness continually eluded his search. Listen to his candid confession. "I have seen the silly round of business and pleasure, and have done with it all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which, in truth, is very low; whereas those, who have not experienced, always overrate them. They only see the gay outside, and are dazzled with the glare. But I have been behind the scenes. When I reflect upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I cannot persuade myself that all the frivolous hurry and bustle of the world had any reality. Shall I tell you, that I bear this melancholy situation with the meritorious resignation and constancy which most men boast? No sir! I really cannot help it. I bear it, because I must bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing but killing time

the best way I can." What a comment is this confession upon what is generally called worldly pleasure.

The dying scene of such a man, is a fearful commentary upon his misspent life. He lies upon his dying bed, annoying all around him, by his irritability. The retrospect of the past affords him no pleasure, and the future is filled with fearful forebodings. And there he lies, brooding in sullen silence upon the present pains, with no consolations in respect to the future. He dies and is forgotten. But oh! this is not the end of his history. Judgment is before him, and eternal retribution succeeds. The imagination shrinks from following him into those regions.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCH.

There are several packet ships plying between New-York and Liverpool. If I am about to cross the Atlantic, I select that ship which appears to me to be most commodious and safe. Other persons, with the same object in view, select a different ship. Perhaps they think it better adapted to encounter storms, or they wish to go in company with a friend who has already

secured his passage. We all embark, on the voyage, in our different ships. God prospers us all. He sends his wind to waft us across the ocean, and one after another we arrive at our destined port. One ship has furnished rather the best accommodations and the most pleasant society. Another has proved the better sailor. A third has rode through every storm, without shipping a sea. But all are good ships. All arrive in safety; and the little inconveniences of the voyage are soon forgotten.

Thus do several individuals, who have become the disciples of Jesus Christ, set out on their voyage to Heaven. Their tastes, their friendships, their means of information respecting the different organizations into which the Christian Church is divided, are different. One has had his attention called to the subject of religion while listening to the appeals of an Episcopal clergyman; and consequently his earliest and his warmest religious associations cluster around the Episcopal church. Another is surrounded with Baptist friends, who have plead with him and prayed for him till, by the blessing of God, he has been led to the believer's hope. And in their Christian sympathies he finds support and encouragement, such as he can find no where else. Another would have gone down to the grave, strong in his sins, were it not that the

earnest accents of a Methodist preacher startled his slumbering conscience. He was led to the class meeting, and, while listening to fervent prayer, the Holy Spirit renewed his heart. Such a man will surely embark in the Methodist ship, to meet the storms and adverse winds of life. Another has been reared in the bosom of a Congregational family. He has, from early life, listened to the prayers of parents, whose stable and cheerful piety has ever been soothing his passions and appealing to his conscience. He has been led by them, by the hand, to the church, and has listened year after year to the calm instructions of their revered pastor. And when, by the grace of God, he becomes a child of Jesus, he thinks there is no ship in the world like the good old Congregationalist. Another, who has few early prepossessions to influence his choice; who has no youthful religious associations entwining around the fibres of his heart, embarks on board any ship that happens to be most convenient. After sailing a few days, a storm arises, or fogs and adverse winds are encountered. He thinks it the fault of the ship, and begins to murmur. As soon as he sees another sail looming in the distance, he will take no rest till he is put on board, bag and baggage. But before many days pass away, some new inconveniences induce him to try

another ship that heaves in sight. And it has generally been observed that such a man never leaves a ship without throwing back a few vollies of peevishness and petulance as he goes down her side. In this way perhaps he changes several times before the voyage of life terminates. But at last he arrives safely in the harbor, and probably expresses his regret, to his early companions, that he did not continue the voyage with them. Such an one should not be severely censured. His instability of mind is, perhaps, as much his misfortune as his fault.

Now and then a few speculators will rig out a raft with graceful awning, and advertise to carry passengers upon terms far more easy and accommodating than any of the regular packets. If any one suggests a fear that it will be hard to weather a gale of wind on the raft, they will assure him that a kind God will not allow a storm to arise and endanger the comfort of his helpless children, but will most certainly send them cloudless skies and favoring winds. In this way not a few of the simple and unwary are induced to embark on board the raft. And unless they happen to be picked up on the way by some of the regular packets, they must surely go to the bottom. Beware of the raft. "There are storms on life's dark waters."

We all have our preferences. I have mine. The ship I have embarked in, I like exceedingly. I like the hull and the rigging, the passengers and the crew. But when I see another ship, with full sail and favoring breeze, careering over the same sea, and bound to the same port, I for one feel like giving her three cheers, and bidding her God speed. If a piratic craft looms in sight, I feel no disposition to stop and fight her, but to crowd on every stitch of canvass, and press on our way.

But to leave this figure; become a sincere disciple of Jesus Christ; openly profess your attachment to him, and consecrate your life to his service, and it is comparatively of little consequence with what denomination of Christians you may unite. I say of *little* consequence—I do not say of *none*. If the heart be right with God, we shall conscientiously strive in all things to conform to his will. And when this conscientious conformity results in different ecclesiastical organizations, holding the same essential truths, and aiming at the same general object, the frown of God is not to be anticipated. Indeed, as far as we can judge, God approves of all such organizations, for he sends his special Spirit to guide and prosper all.

1. It is the duty of every one, not only to repent of sin, and trust in the Savior, but also to

make a public profession of his faith in Christ. God instituted the Christian church that his friends on earth might be associated together, and their energies combined. Even if we could see no advantages resulting from this arrangement, the fact alone, that God has instituted a church, is abundantly sufficient to condemn any man who does not sustain that institution by union with it. Every man, who is not a member of the church of Christ, is practically opposing an institution which God has established at an infinite expense, and which he cherishes with the most peculiar care. Is it asked, shall a man unite with the church, if he is not a Christian? Certainly not! But it is the duty of every man to be a Christian, and to profess his Christian faith.

God has not only established the church, but he has distinctly enjoined the duty of a public profession of religion. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also, before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." The union of Christians in churches is one of the most conspicuous objects in the New Testament. The public profession of penitence and faith in Jesus, was the imperative and the essential duty of all who became in heart his

disciples. And he who now neglects this duty, finds himself in conflict with the whole spirit of the Bible.

This organization of the friends of the Redeemer is essential to meet the wants of the world. In moral as in physical conflicts, there must be strength of combined action. Had not the early Christians devoted themselves to the establishment of churches, the knowledge of the Redeemer had probably long ere this perished from the earth. The Sabbath, the Gospel ministry, the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, all cluster around the Christian church. While the church lives, they live, and their influence must be felt. When the church dies, they expire, and the light of the world is extinguished. There is nothing which can be a substitute for the Christian church. No ardor of individual zeal, and energy of individual action, can, for one moment, stem the current of popular sin. The influence of the church is felt far and wide upon society, because it is a powerful association of the moral integrity and sanctified talent of the world, acting with much of the decision of a single mind. Guided by its adorable head the great Captain of our salvation, its various branches, like the infantry, the cavalry, and the artillery of a well disciplined army, are acting in concert for the

accomplishment of one object. You may join either division of this army which you please;—the artillery, as it moves in solid phalanx and with heavy armor;—the infantry, as with firm and unbroken ranks it repulses assault, and presses forward, holding every inch of ground it gains;—or the cavalry, skirting the field, and repulsing in incessant skirmishes the advanced guard of the foe. But if you do not openly enlist under this holy banner; if you are not an avowed soldier in the sacramental host of God's elect, the influence of your example is to frustrate the benevolent designs of God. True, the victory will be achieved without you, but you will have no share in the triumph. As you have shrunk from the conflict, the Savior cannot recognize you as his.

Union with the church is essential to secure peace of mind. No one can have continued religious enjoyment while standing aloof from a duty so plain and imperative as this. It is not consistent with God's established principles of government, that mental peace should be found in union with dissent from his will. And universal experience shews, that disquietude reigns, in the heart of him who does not, in this respect, acquiesce in the decisions of God. He can do nothing to atone for this neglect. The wealth of the Indies, cast into the treasury of the Lord,

will not purchase peace. God has enjoined peace and duty. And till his government shall fail, they cannot separately exist. Reader! can you be happy when God is your enemy? Or, if you think you have become reconciled to God, can you be happy when living in known disobedience to his wishes? Why is it that your mind has so long been clouded; that despondency has for so many years reigned over you? It is simply because God, in his wisdom, has so framed the mind, that disobedience secures dissatisfaction. And be assured, that so long as you shrink from an open avowal of your faith in Jesus, you must continue as you now are, a stranger to that hope which brings peace and joy to the soul.

Every man's conscience tells him, that he not only ought not to conceal his principles, but that he ought to exhibit them and enforce them to the utmost of his power. The light of truth may as well be extinguished as hid. Conscience will not cease to upbraid, while you do violence to its instructions. If you would be happy then, resolve whom you will serve, and act accordingly. Do not be afraid. Do not hesitate. Cast off that ignoble fear which restrains from duty. Determine that you will, through the grace of God, in view of every danger and of every reverse, throw yourself, unreservedly into that glorious cause, which demands the energies

of every hand, and the affections of every heart. Then will your name be enrolled in the list of God's soldiers. The harps of heaven will vibrate with the richest strains of welcome, and your troubled heart will be at peace.

Do you say, "I am not a Christian, and therefore it is not proper for me to join the church?" Surely this is a most fearful aggravation, and not an extenuation of your disobedience. It is your duty immediately to become the friend of God, and publicly to profess it. It is your duty to repent of sin, and openly to say so. God demands it. Conscience demands it. And as long as you contend against God and against conscience, so long you must endure his frown, either mingled with mercy, as here on earth, or darkened to unmingled displeasure in eternity.

Do you say, "I hope that I am a Christian. but yet I fear that I may be deceived, and I tremble at the thought of eating and drinking unworthily." He who comes to the table of the Lord for ambitious purposes, or with spiritual pride, or in hypocritical pretence, may well tremble. But he who comes to the sacramental table with a humble heart, with a sincere desire to obtain spiritual strength, to surmount temptation and sin, comes in that frame of mind which the Bible enjoins. Sometimes we meet with a person who prides himself upon his fancied hu-

mility. He thinks that he has so much of that Christian virtue, such views of his own unworthiness, that he cannot obey God's commands. And thus does he practically say to every professor of religion, "It is your want of humility that induces you to obey God. If you were as humble in spirit as I am, you would do as I do." What a monstrous case of moral deformity! Too humble in spirit to obey God! And yet these cases are not rare. Every minister encounters this spirit, as he passes the rounds of his parish.

There is, in truth, no occasion for perplexity here. It is the duty of us all to choose God as our friend; to accept Christ as our Savior; to look to the Holy Spirit as our guide. It is our duty publicly to acknowledge this our choice, and to take upon ourselves all the responsibilities resulting from this profession. If we entertain fears respecting our spiritual condition, we should be incited by them to new diligence in every duty of heart and of life. Instead of neglecting any exercise which religion enjoins, we should double the frequency and the fervor of our prayers, and fulfil with more scrupulous fidelity all the claims of religion. The Christian, in the slough of despond, if he stops, will sink. His only safety lies in looking to God for help, and pressing on his way.

There are many persons who wish that there were some silent and unseen path, through which they might silently creep to heaven. They dare not march through the embattled hosts of an opposing world. They desire the rewards of the victory, but shrink from the toil of the conflict. In any of the other relations of life, they would be ashamed of this meanness. But here they will try to devise some plan by which they can secure God's favor, without having it known by the world that they are his friends. Such men must ever carry in their countenances the evidence of the disquietude and conscious ignominy which reign in their hearts. He, who is not sufficiently ingenuous to acknowledge that he has been in the wrong, when conscious of it, is incapable of happiness. And he who has not sufficient magnanimity openly to espouse the cause which his understanding is convinced is the one of truth and happiness, must expect the constant reproaches of his own heart.

2. Having made a profession of religion, your duties as a church member are of eminent importance. Your covenant vows with God are solemn and eternally binding. You cannot enter into obligations of business, which shall have equal claims. The Christian, who so enlarges his business, and so multiplies his earthly cares,

that he cannot find time to be an active, zealous, vigilant, church member, has violated his promises, dishonored his profession, apostatized from his principles, and is garnering remorse and shame.

Every christian should make it a matter of conscience to attend the meetings of the church for conference and prayer. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," is a divine injunction. How can a church be prospered, if its members regard the ordinary concerns of life as of more importance than the claims of the church. The fact itself shews that religion, in all its relations, occupies a very subordinate position in their minds. Visit such a church, and you will find it powerless and spiritually dead. It puts forth no influence to stimulate the consciences of a guilty world. Nay! it inflicts a positive injury upon the moral sense of the community. It enfeebles the influence of the Bible, and disarms the pulpit of its persuasive power. The church should be the embodying of the religion of the Bible,—the incarnation of its spirit. And when a thoughtless community looks upon a church, worldly and regardless of the peculiar obligations which religion imposes, it is a practical commentary which entirely explains away the meaning of the text. How can a minister, under such circumstances, preach with any hope

of success. As he endeavors to exhibit the spirituality and the elevated claims of the divine law, and to press those claims home to the consciences of his hearers, the attention of all whom he addresses is directed to the dead church. And though it is indeed illogical to judge of the commands of God by the misconduct of his creatures, still it is true that the example of Christians greatly weakens or increases the influence of the precepts of Christ. An individual has, perhaps, in such a community, been led, by the providences of God, to think seriously of his religious duties. An evening meeting is appointed. With a heart subdued and tender, and "almost persuaded" to submit to Christ, he goes, perhaps for the first time, to the vestry. There every thing looks cold and cheerless. The minister is in his chair. Dea. A. is in one seat, Mrs. B. in another, Mr. C. in another, and two or three children near the door. A hymn is read—

> Religion is the chief concern
> Of mortals here below;
> May I its great importance learn,
> Its sovereign virtue know.
>
> More needful this than glittering wealth,
> Or aught the world bestows;
> Not reputation, food, or health,
> Can give us such repose.

The minister waits a few moments, but there is a dead silence; there is no one present who

can sing. He reads a portion of scripture, and then offers prayer. But his heart is chilled and discouraged, and despondency marks his supplications. He rises to address his audience, but his energies are palsied, and the words which come slowly to his lips, are echoed back by the empty walls. The person, who entered this meeting impressed with a sense of the importance of religion, begins to think that he was needlessly alarmed. He asks himself, "Where are the members of this church? Where is Mr. D? He is in his factory. Where is Mr. E? He is in his shop, Where is Mr. F? He is hoeing in his garden." "Well," he says, "if religion is not worth the attention of professing Christians, it is not worth my attention." His religious impressions vanish, and he goes home, ashamed of his solicitude, and farther than ever from the kingdom of God. Now I am sorry to say that this is not a carricature. True, it is an extreme case, yet such cases do occur, and very many nearly approximating to it. It would seem that such meetings are enough to chill an angel's devotional ardor.

But how different is the moral influence of a church in which all the members are faithful. Go into the crowed vestry, and listen to the evening hymn.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one.
Our comforts and our cares.

The most thoughtless sinner, whom curiosity has lured to this house of prayer, can hardly witness the scene unmoved. And as the notes of devotion are borne upon the evening breeze to the adjoining dwellings, or to the ears of the passer by, they carry to the heart reproof and warning. When the minister rises to speak, and looks upon the crowded audience before him, as he sees around him many yet in their sins, and feels sustained by the presence and the prayers of his church, his spirit is stirred within him, and from the fulness of his heart he pours out instruction and warning and entreaty. How happy is a minister, whose instructions are enforced by the example of such a church! How highly favored is the community in which such a church is pouring out daily and hourly its calm radiance! Under such circumstances religion must prosper; the preaching of the cross must be effectual. Here experience confirms what reason teaches, for such a church is always found making inroads to the territories of sin, and gaining spiritual conquests.

Each individual Christian should therefore form his arrangements in reference to these duties. In his weekly and his yearly plans, he should appropriate the proper time to the stated meetings of the church, and should allow nothing to interfere with that appropriation but strong necessity. The simple intention of being faithful as a Christian, will not secure fidelity. We must have system. We must form plans of life, assigning to each duty its appropriate time, or life will glide unprofitably away. Does a friend call in to pass the evening? Mention frankly to him that you have an engagement, which renders it necessary for you to withdraw. In short, regard your duties as a church member as among the most important of the duties of life. Act accordingly. You then have peace. You are conscious of consistency. You are cheered with the daily increasing evidence that you are useful in the service of God. Blessed with the affection of Christians, and the respect of the world, you go on your way rejoicing. There are many such Christians. May God grant that you, reader, may add to the number.

Occasionally an individual is found who allows domestic duties to suffer, by attending religious meetings. We have known some parents, of warm piety, who would, evening after eve-

ning, be absent from home, leaving their children almost without restraint. There is a tendency in some minds to multiply these seasons of religious enjoyment, so as seriously to interfere with other and most important obligations. It is not unfrequently the case that a mother neglects her domestic duties, that she may enjoy some of the external privileges of religion. She, in some degree, sacrifices the welfare of her husband and her children, not to discharge a Christian duty, but to enjoy a religious privilege; for that which is a duty under some circumstances, ceases to be such under others. Your husband is not interested in religion. It has even been a great trial to his feelings, to have you unite with the church. He has, however, consented to have you make a profession of religion, and is perfectly willing that you should regularly attend church upon the Sabbath. But he does not wish to attend evening meetings himself, and it is very unpleasant to him to have you go and leave him at home alone. He comes home some evening, later than usual, weary with care, and perhaps secretly dejected with the thought that your feelings are so different from his. He finds his supper upon the table, and that you have gone to an evening meeting. He sits down at his solitary meal disconsolate, and saying to himself, "Wife has found new friends, and home

has lost all its charms for me." Soon he hears one of the children, up stairs, crying. There is no mother to hear its voice, and he goes up to soothe the little one, feeling all the while that the piety of the mother causes the children to be neglected. The child is soon hushed and falls asleep. The father again enters his deserted parlor, and finding no inducement to remain at home, sallies out to seek a refuge from his silent sorrows. These are the natural feelings of every heart under such circumstances. He probably will thus be lured to scenes of gaiety, and from thence to haunts of profligacy. He loses his attachment for his family and his home, and moves with rapid steps in the road to ruin.

Now if it were an enjoined duty for the Christian mother to attend the evening prayer meeting, she ought to do so, at whatever expense of her earthly happiness. The laws of God, as revealed in his word, or by an enlightened conscience, must be obeyed at every hazard. But it is not a duty enjoined, irrespective of circumstances. And though no one can unnecessarily deprive himself of the privilege of meeting with Christians friends for prayer and praise, without shewing a criminal want of interest in spiritual things, yet, in the case above supposed, it is the duty of the wife and mother cheerfully to deprive herself of this privilege, in regard to the

welfare of her family. It is true that the objections which are alleged against an evening meeting to serve God, are frivolous in the extreme. It is difficult for the Christian wife to conceive why it should be less objectionable for her to remain until eleven or twelve o'clock at night at the theatre or the ball room, than to pass an hour and a half in the soothing exercises of devotion. When she returns from the evening meeting, at the ringing of the nine o'clock bell, with her spirit tranquilized by religious reflections, and retires at an early hour for refreshing sleep, she cannot understand why she is not making better preparation for the duties of the ensuing day, than when she returns at midnight, feverish and exhausted, from some scene of fashionable revelry, to pass a sleepless night, and to arise late in the morning with an aching head and a saddened heart. Still, as long as her husband does feel in this way,—and he probably will feel so till he becomes himself a Christian,—she ought to do every thing which she can do, consistently with Christian principle, to gratify his desires. She should show him that religion makes her more scrupulously attentive to every thing which can cheer domestic life. They who crowd the halls of mirthful pleasure, and who know nothing of the joys of devotion, cannot understand how grateful the emotions cher-

ished in the heart, as, in the silence of the evening, Christians meet to prepare for their anticipated heaven. But, in the present case, this pleasure ought at once to be relinquished. And if your husband sees that you do relinquish it to gratify him, he will be far more likely to give his willing consent to have you go, and to accompany you himself. Again we repeat that duty ought never to be sacrificed. And under ordinary circumstances, it is absolutely the duty of the Christian, as well as his invaluable privilege, to attend the meetings of the church for conference and prayer. It is a duty, because it promotes the individual's spiritual improvement, strengthens the influence of the church, and leads the thoughtless to regard religion as a subject deserving attention.

But, under the circumstances now supposed, it ceases to be a duty, and becomes only a privilege, which God in his wisdom sees fit to deny you. We say, it ceases to be a duty, because this is one of those cases in which there is no positive command to guide us, and where we must decide in reference to apparent consequences. There is no dereliction of principle involved in such a concession as this. If your husband invites you to take a ride, for pleasure, upon the Sabbath, you must refuse, at all events, for you feel that it is an open violation of God's

command. If he urges you to go with him to the theatre, where you must listen to indelicate inuendoes, and gaze upon scenes which no modest woman loves to see, you feel conscientiously constrained to decline; for you cannot, consistently with your Christian profession, countenance that which excites to sin. Any compromise of principle will be fatal to your Christian character and Christian influence.

But if he ask you to pass the hours with him in the bosom of your family, by so doing you violate no moral precept, though it might be a source of the richest enjoyment to you, if you could go together to the evening prayer. It is not my object here to lay down a general principle to which there can be no exception, or to apply the decision in this case to other cases which may seem to be parallel. In almost every church, there are many persons situated as we have above described; and consequently this one individual case is worthy of attention. There are many Christians who sincerely desire counsel upon such subjects, and by them, at least, these suggestions will be kindly received.

Here is a lady, who is a professor of religion. Her husband is not. He is a man whose integrity secures to him universal respect, and whose kind feelings will not allow him for a moment to interfere with the religious liberty of his wife

He is perfectly willing to go with his wife and his children to meeting upon the Sabbath, and manifests, at times, no inconsiderable interest himself upon the subject of religion. He however feels that shame, which every unrenewed heart experiences, in having it known that he is thinking of his sins and of his Savior. Occasionally he feels as though he were alone in the world. His wife can no longer walk with him in thoughtlessness and gaiety and neglect of God. Occurrences, slightly discordant to his feelings, are in consequence continually arising. His wife should therefore pray, daily and hourly, that in every thing, in which principle is not involved, she may conform to his feelings. She should study, with the utmost solicitude, to surround his home with every joy. She should make a willing sacrifice of every personal gratification to promote his happiness. Let him see that much as you would enjoy going to the evening meeting, and highly as you would be gratified if he would accompany you, still, for his sake, you are ever willing and love to stay at home. Let him see that, strongly as you are attached to Christian friends, there is no society preferable to his. If you thus feel and act, while you show that you cannot in any thing, act contrary to your principles of right and wrong, you will secure your husband's esteem,

and touch his heart with a sense of the loveliness of religion.

And here I cannot refrain from saying, be sincere and honest and open-hearted in every thing that you do. Let your husband feel that he has your entire confidence. Do not make a visit or go to a meeting of which you are unwilling that he should be informed. Do not contribute a dollar to a benevolent object, which you wish to conceal from him. God does not need that deception and stratagem should be introduced to his service. Many have probably erred in this respect, with the very best of intentions. Be open-hearted as the day. It is the only course of safety, of peace, and of piety. We do not say that an imaginary or a real case may not be presented, in which an oppressive husband may exercise such acts of tyranny, that the wife may be compelled to withhold all confidence from him, and to act for herself. But such cases are rare indeed. In all ordinary cases, and in almost all extraordinary cases, entire sincerity and frankness will be most in accordance with religion and policy. If you do any thing, which you are afraid will be found out, you cease to be innocent.

Every church member who can, *consistently with other duties*, should attend the meetings of the church. He should make it a point of con-

science. If you neglect these duties from indifference, or from allowing yourself to become too much involved in worldly cares, you cannot be guiltless in the sight of God. And beware how you cherish needless excuses. You may deceive yourself, but you cannot elude the scrutiny of God.

3. Every Christian should feel the importance of promoting friendly intercourse among the members of the Church. The affection which existed between the early Christians attracted the attention and the admiration of even heathen opponents. The confidence which the world saw that they reposed in one another, not only did much to repel contempt and to disarm prejudice, but its persuasive, its alluring influence was powerful. And so it must ever be. A band of Christians, acquainted with one another, sympathizing with one another, and firmly united in mutual affection, is invincible. And satan, conscious that he can bring no force to arrest the triumphs of such a band, devotes all his resources to promote its disunion. When a church is disunited it is shorn of its strength. Religion will surely decline. It is probable that satan has no more efficient agents in the world, than contending churches. There it is that his banner waves proudly, and thousands congregate around it with triumph and shouts.

With an united church, religion will surely prosper. Dismay is sent at once into the enemies ranks, and his hosts are scattered. How many examples could we bring forward to illustrate both of these truths!

We could lead you to the village where christians live in harmony; where no one passes his brother in the street without the smile of recognition. We could lead you to the church meeting, and exhibit to you the cordial greeting with which every brother and sister is received. We could lead you from house to house, that you might listen to the prayers offered, by each, for all. And then, we could open to you the records of the church, and read to you the history of its healthy prosperity. We could then lead you to the store and the shop and the farm, and show you that the influence of the church is deeply felt, in putting the caviling infidel to shame, and in impressing upon the minds of the young and of the old, a sense of the reality and the importance and the loveliness of religion. We might then lead you to the inquiry meeting, and shew you a large number with penitent hearts and tearful eyes, inquiring the way to Heaven.

Such we believe to be, almost invariably, the condition of any community, in which the church is harmonious and pursues its steadfast

course of practically exhibiting the principles of the gospel. The piety of such church members, will be continually on the increase. To use the beautiful illustration of scripture, their path will be like that of the ascending sun. It grows brighter and brighter as it rises above the horison; it shines in great and still greater splendor as it approaches the zenith; till at last, in all the glory of its meridian altitude, it pours forth its beams in the wide spread effulgence of midday. The few faint tints that at first dimly interrupt the darkness of the morning, thus progress by constant and uninterrupted advances to the perfect splendor of the noonday sun. So it is with true religion. And such christians, will ever exhibit this calm and steady increase of piety in the heart. Their religion will not be like the meteor's glare, that flashes for a moment in the midnight sky and all again is dark; it will not be like the lightning playing for a moment upon the bosom of the cloud, and all again is blackness; it will not be like the tumultuous eruption of volcanic fire, appalling the beholder by its unexpected appearance and its terrific power;—but it will be a serene and unwavering and increasing ardor, a devotedness which grows with one's years, and which is strengthened as it is called into exercise.

And surely this is the kind of piety which the Bible enjoins. We are not to indulge in

paroxysms of religious interest; to have periodical seasons of devotedness and declension, but at all times to be pressing forward in God's service with a zeal which never shall be weary, with a perseverance that never shall be interrupted. The religion of the Bible is not a religion of fits and starts—spasmodic movements of excited feelings—paroxysms of intense emotion succeeded by weeks and months of langour and declension, but a constant diligence in the Christian life, controlling our thoughts and feelings and actions every day and every hour while we live.

What more humiliating spectacle can earth exhibit, than a band of the professed disciples of Jesus, disunited and contending. And yet how many such spectacles are witnessed. Not a few churches expend all their energies, in contending with one another. Unless there is a constant endeavor, among all the members of the church, to promote harmony and intimacy, it will be difficult long to retain concord. How many questions of agitating interest are now before the churches! How deeply is the mind of the christian community excited, by the all engrossing topics now crowded upon its attention! And how different are the modes approved by conscientious men, for accomplishing results which all intensely desire! If there is

not, in a church, that spirit of conciliation and mutual confidence, which intimate acquaintance alone can give, there is daily danger that the flame of contention will blaze from its midst. And when such a fire is once kindled who can predict its ravages! It generally burns with increasing fury till it exhausts itself. Every effort to extinguish seems but to add to the extent and the calamitousness of the conflagration.

Often have we seen a church upon the very verge of this ruin, and saved by that spirit of forbearance and confidence, which intimate acquaintance had produced, and which led them to sacrifice their differences upon the altar of peace. Every church must be continually exposed to these dangers. Occasions of excitement are hourly presenting themselves. How far shall the church identify itself with the existing societies for assailing particular evils! What novelties shall be encouraged to arouse the attention of the slumbering sinner? And how shall this case of discipline be disposed of, to which the anxious and excited attention of the whole church is directed. Bring together a number of strangers to decide upon these questions, each one having his own independent thoughts and favorite views, and all conscientiously inflexible in advocating that which they think right, and how hopeless is a harmonious

result. Look now at some of the churches of our cities, which have thus been rent and distracted for years. In the long strife, many of their members have lost almost every thing that is lovely and of good report. The state of heart which the apostle would have them cherish in the injunction, "be ye kindly affectioned, one to another in brotherly love," has all disappeared. Their moral feelings are like the physical features of the weather beaten sailor, who has been for years contending with tempests and midnight storms. His hard features can scarcely be relaxed by a smile, and his eye is a stranger to any moisture but that which comes from the driving rain or the melting snow. Oh it is sad to look upon such perverted exhibitions of christianity. And yet almost every reader will not only call to mind such individuals but such churches. The christian character, which is formed in the element of strife, is one that does not adorn religion, but probably repels more from the Savior, than it can, by any efforts, be the instrument of converting.

How important therefore is it that every christian should do all in his power to preserve the unity of the church. This can only be done by cultivating social and friendly feelings. The members of the church should become acquainted with one another. There should be the

mutual smile of recognition as they pass in the streets. There should be the kind greeting when they meet in the vestry. And in the hour of sickness or affliction, there should be that manifestation of sympathy, which calls into exercise every affectionate feeling of the heart. The church should be as a well regulated and affectionate household, where indeed there are diversities of employment and of rank, but where confidence and harmony and attachment prevail. The lady of the household, looks with interest upon those employed in the family in humble capacities. She sympathises with them in their sorrows, and visits their bedside in sickness. The gentleman goes to the field, and speaks kindly to those who serve him there. With the distinct recognition of that diversity of rank which, God, in His wisdom, has ordained, there is cordial friendship and unity of heart.

There must ever be different ranks in society. It is so even in Heaven. One star differeth from another star in glory. There are cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels. It must ever continue to be so here on earth. They, who are of similar habits and similar pursuits in life, will naturally form intimacies, and associate together. They, who have been led to intellectual cultivation almost exclusively; whose days and nights are passed in study, will

of course seek their friends among those of similar tastes. They are incapacitated from deriving much pleasure from social intercourse with those whose habits of life and trains of thought are dissimilar. The rich man, who, from infancy, has been nurtured in the lap of wealth, who is accustomed to spacious apartments, and rich furniture, and all the artificial refinements which usually accompany such a condition, will not go to the humble dwelling of the poor man to find his friend. God in his wise Providence, has placed him in a different sphere, surrounded him with different associations; and it is here, in his native element, that he must find his companions and his friends. The day laborer, in his humble yet comfortable dwelling, with unpolished person and uncultivated mind, but contented heart, can find no real enjoyment in the literary circle that assembles in the library of the student. He has no desire to meet the rich man's guests, as, with the grace and ease which early habit gives, they move through the splendid halls and lounge on sofas and ottomans. It is at the fireside of his own neighbor and equal, he loves to pass the social evening. There he feels at home. He is in the region of his own habits and his own thoughts. And there it is that he wishes his sons and his daughters to form connections for life. The distribu-

tion of enjoyment is far more equal than is generally supposed. But it seems utterly impossible that there should ever be an equalization of rank and condition. Let each then cultivate a happy and contented spirit, and feel and manifest kindness, towards those above and below him. This is the spirit of the gospel.

It is as offensive to God to look up with envy, as it is to look down with scorn. We must all learn in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content. As well may the bird complain that it can not gambol with the dolphin in the depths of the ocean, or the lion ranging the forest, murmur that he can not, like the eagle, soar in the skies, as man repine at the different ranks and conditions with which God has diversified the human family. The pride and haughtiness, which the rich and distinguished sometimes assume, is exceedingly odious in the sight of God, and is severely condemned by the gospel. But those in humble life, often manifest an aspiring spirit equally displeasing to God, and contradictory to the precepts of the Savior.

Paul has given very specific directions, to banish this spirit from the churches. And he found it as necessary to direct his cautions to the lowly in condition, as to the elevated in rank. It seems, that in those days some christian servants, thought, that because they and

their employers were members of the same church, and sat down at the same sacramental table, and hoped to be associate angels in Heaven, that therefore there should be great equality and perfect familiarity here. This is the wicked spirit of unsanctified ambition. It still exists, notwithstanding the reproof and warning it receives from the Apostle. Says Paul "let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own master as worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

This spirit harmonises with all the arrangements of God. Each one moves in his own sphere, calmly and happily, like the orbs of heaven. The employer and the employed regard each other with mutual confidence and affection, and there is the interchange of the most sincere kindness. These remarks apply to those relations in life which are consistent with the principles of the Gospel,—with that universal feeling of brotherhood which Christianity enjoins. The despot and the oppressor will find no apologist at the day of judgment. He who, for Christ's sake, has patiently endured wrong and outrage,

will then find his sorrows ended, while his oppressor must abide the decision of an offended God.

Christian reader, cultivate a friendly acquaintance with the humble members of the church. Greet them kindly when you meet them. In sickness and in sorrow visit them. Be tender of their feelings, and by unfailing benevolence secure their good will.

Are you in the humbler walks of life? Do not look with envy upon those who are above you in wealth or education, for this is censuring God. Improve your mind and add to your wealth, as much as you can, by honest industry, and be contented with your lot. With such a state of feeling in the church, dissension is but little to be feared. There will be a respect for each other's opinions, and a mutual spirit of conciliation which will ensure harmony of counsel.

It is often in the power of one stubborn individual to keep a whole church for months in a state of disquietude. He will set up his will against the prayerful decisions of the whole church. He will persist in fomenting strife, though he knows it is destroying harmony and happiness. It is astonishing to see how much of passion and prejudice and unfairness he will allow himself to exhibit. Such a man is a ter-

rible curse to a church. The ingredients of such a character are generally mortified pride, disappointed ambition, and self confidence. He will deceive himself by supposing that he is contending for principle, when he is the victim of wilfulness. There seems to be no access to his understanding or his heart. All appeals to his Christian feelings are in yain. The united opinion of all his brethren, is nothing to him. The decision of the most devoted ministers of God deserves no regard. The destruction of the church, the grief of his brethren and sisters, the exultation of the foes of Christ, the ruin of many souls, are all of no moment in his eyes, compared with having his own will. A church can hardly suffer a more severe calamity, than to have such a person in its enclosures.

A man of pious feelings and humble frame of mind, will never place himself in such an attitude. If a decision is formed which, to him, appears incorrect, he will say, "Brethren, my opinion is different, but I am led to distrust my own opinion from the unanimity with which you have come to a different decision. I know that I am not infallible, and I shall therefore cordially acquiesce in the result to which you have come." Now who does not love such a spirit? Who is not compelled to love such a man? Suppose that it shall afterwards appear that this

individual was right and the church were wrong, is there a single member of the church, who would not be glad to take this brother by the hand and say, "It would have been better for us if we had followed your opinion." This is the spirit of mutual confidence and conciliation which should ever be cherished. There is no infallibility here on earth. It is to be expected, not only that individuals will entertain wrong opinions, but that the churches will occasionally decide in a way that will not be for the best. There must always be a greater or less diversity of opinion upon almost every question which can come before the church. And while every member should be ready, frankly and kindly to express his own views, it should be the established and unalterable principle of every one, not merely patiently to submit to the decision of the majority, but with the utmost cheerfulness and good feeling to acquiesce in that decision. Or if the circumstance of the case are so very peculiar, that you feel that you cannot in conscience continue your relation with the church, remember that the other members have a conscience and rights as well as yourself, and ask for a letter of dismission, in those courteous and respectful terms which will ensure a kind reply. This is the spirit of the Gospel, and he who pursues a different course dishonors his Christian

profession, and brings calamity and sorrow to the cause of Christ. Members of the church of Christ, resolve that there shall be peace in your borders. Do any thing but sin to ensure this peace. Make any sacrifice of your own opinions and your own interests to promote harmony. Then will the time be near, when the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

CHAPTER V.

YOUR NEIGHBOR.

"WHAT kind of a man is the landlord with whom we lodge to-night!" said a gentleman to a stage-driver, as they were slowly ascending a hill in the interior of Maine. "He has one mark of a christian," was the reply, "every body hates him."

And is it true, that to be hated is one of the evidences of piety? The Gospel enjoins integrity, generosity, humility, kindness, charity,—every thing that is lovely and of good report. And can the practice of these moral precepts secure the hatred of mankind? No! look at the Christian, whether he be clergyman or layman, who most consistently carries out in his conduct

the principles of the Gospel, and you will find that he has the esteem and affection of the great mass of mankind. Was the philanthropic Howard hated? Was the inflexible integrity of Wilberforce despised? Was the amiable, the laborious, the self-denying Swartz, a man without friends? Occasionally we meet with a man who sustains the reputation of a very devoted Christian, and who is still very obnoxious to the community. But in every such case, we believe it will be found that it is some trait in his character, which is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, which excites hostility. He is gloomy in his feelings, or harsh and uncivil in his intercourse with others, or austere in manners, or selfish and mean in his business transactions. These are the traits of character which excite opposition. Our Savior had so many friends, even among the wicked crowds of Jerusalem, that the rulers did not dare to lay hands upon him, for they feared the people. And at last it was with difficulty, and through false accusation, and by stratagem only, that they succeeded in leading him to the cross on Calvary.

We have often thought that there was a great mistake, in most of our books upon practical religion, in making such a separation between faith and works. Devotional feeling is too much disunited from those moral traits of character

which are enjoined in the Gospel. True religion embraces all the duties of life. And in the Bible we are as earnestly and as repeatedly entreated to love our neighbor as ourselves, as to love God with the whole heart. It is not enough that we read the Bible, and pray, and examine our hearts, and meditate upon the eternal world —that we look to the Spirit for guidance, and to the Savior for salvation. We must be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love; we must be given to hospitality; we must be courteous; we must cherish every thing that is lovely and of good report. It is in consequence of this unnatural separation of devotional feeling from amiable character, that religion is often presented in so obnoxious an aspect to the world. He who lives according to the moral precepts of the Gospel, while cherishing the feelings of penitence and faith which the Gospel inculcates, must commend himself to the approbation of every good understanding. And I know not why it is not as criminal, to disobey the rules which God has given us for our intercourse with our fellow men, as to be forgetful of penitence and negligent of prayer.

The fact is not to be disguised, that there is in this world much of loud vaunting profession of religion, without any of the genuine characteristics of godliness. Many a man will pray

with fervor in his family, and be punctual in his attendance upon all the meetings of the church, and will pray earnestly for, and plead earnestly with sinners to repent, and will then go home, and be guilty of some petty meanness, which excites universal disgust. And as he sees the evidences that he is obnoxious to his neighbors, he presses to his soul the soothing sentiment, that it is the lot of the good man to be persecuted. He is despised for his meanness, and not for his piety; and he half knows it. Such a man seldom receives the contempt he merits. His Christian friends hope that he is a good man, and they try to look with charity upon his faults; they make excuses for him, and thus he is shielded. These cases are not rare. Almost every minister weeps over such perverted exhibitions of piety in his church. And it is not unfrequently the case, that a church mourns over the obstacles that their pastor thus throws in the way of the conversion of sinners. We sometimes see such a clergyman, uncouth in manners, and more so in heart, who ranges through his parish like a wild buffalo on the praries. He breaks over all the restraints of society, and violates all the civilities of life, and when he has arrayed every man in hostility to him, he says it is an evidence of his moral courage and his faithfulness, and comforts himself

with saying, "Blessed are ye, when all men speak evil of you." Our Savior carefully guarded this sentiment by saying, "Blessed are ye when all men speak evil of you *falsely*." But he apparently thinks that this last word is of but little consequence, and that it may as well be omitted.

In this chapter it will be my object to dwell upon that part of religion which consists in our duties to our fellow men.

1. Be honest. Does it seem that this is a singular injunction to give to one who professes to be a Christian? Every day we hear complaints of the dishonesty of those who profess to be governed by Christian principle. A man goes to a pious mechanic to get some work done. He is promised it on a certain day. Now he ought to be as sure of having it on that day, as though the mechanic had given his bond, with a heavy penalty in case of failure. But is it so? Does the pious mantua-maker have the gown done at the appointed hour? Does the pious boot-maker send home the boots at the appointed day? And do either of these persons feel that they have committed a heinous sin against God and against man, in thus falsifying their word? No! they will go on, year after year, thus promising that which they have no intention of performing. Here is moral dishonesty, spreading

far and wide through the Christian community. We meet it every day. It is a grievous sin and a sad reproach to the cause of Christ. A minister, of rather quaint simplicity, in preaching to the church, adopted, as one head of his discourse, the sentiment, "Some Christians will lie." Many may not be pleased with such Saxon plainness of speech; but it is a melancholy fact that no one can be found who will deny its truth. When quite a young man, I once went to board in a family, in which a lawyer was also boarding. I was received into the family for half a dollar less a week than the lawyer. The gentleman of the house was a member of the church, but for fear that the lawyer would be dissatisfied if he should learn that I was paying less for board than himself, he wished that, if any questions were asked, I would intimate that we paid the same price. My conscience rebelled against this, and I told the man plainly that I could do no such thing. He therefore, to prevent the lawyer from questioning me, and thus ascertaining the truth, took occasion to introduce the subject himself, and, probably, without the *positive assertion* that there was no difference in the prices we paid, carefully conveyed to his mind the idea that we were received upon the same terms. A few evenings after this, the lawyer and I happened

to be sitting alone by the fire, just before retiring, when suddenly out came the question,

"What do you pay for board here, Mr. A?"

"Two dollars and a half a week," was the hearty reply. To this the lawyer responded with a hearty and apparently exulting laugh, and then replied,

"Our good, pious landlord told me that you paid three dollars; but I thought from his appearance at the time, that he lied."

Now what must have been the feelings of this lawyer, as he afterwards heard this man praying with his family, and saw him going to the communion table! And yet how full is the world of such falsehood as this? How many professing Christians have been detected in similar deceptions.

"Where have you been this afternoon?" said a gentleman pleasantly to his wife, as she returned home just before tea.

"I have been to make a few calls," was the apparently frank and honest reply.

Soon after a lady called in, and in the course of conversation said, in the simplicity of her heart, "What a delightful lecture we had this afternoon! I think I never heard a more interesting sermon."

The husband looked up with surprise. He saw at once that his wife tried to deceive him.

His confidence in the honesty of her statements was at once destroyed. There can be no more harmony between that husband and wife. He knows that she is deceitful, and consequently can never trust her.

The wife tries to appease the reproaches of conscience by saying, I uttered nothing that was false; I did go out to make some calls, and I did not say that I had not been to meeting too. But she cannot thus silence that faithful monitor which God has stationed in her breast. She knows that she tried to deceive her husband, and she feels mortified that she has been detected. In this she has sinned. And she has consequently lost her peace of mind, and many and sad woes will follow in the train of this moral delinquency. A little child has penetration enough to understand this deception, and the mother who is guilty of it, not only loses the confidence of her husband, but instructs her children in fraud. Be honest. You cannot otherwise be happy or safe.

"What is the price of this silk?" asks a pious lady of a shopkeeper.

"One dollar and a quarter a yard," is the reply.

"That is very high," the lady rejoins; "I saw exactly such a piece as this in another store, for a dollar a yard."

Now is this lady sure that the pieces are *exactly* the same? Is the texture of the one precisely as fine as the texture of the other? Is she positive that there is not the difference of an inch or two in the width? By no means. She wickedly makes an assertion which she does not know to be true, that she may beat down the shopman's price. She is guilty of falsehood, and from the meanest motive—merely to save a few coppers on a yard of silk. A professor of religion will sometimes thus go, for a whole morning, from shop to shop, uttering in each one many false assertions. How is religion thus dishonored. True probity requires, not only that we should not say any thing that we know to be false, but that we also should make no assertions which we do not know to be accurately true.

A Christian is long struggling under pecuniary embarrassments. Every month he gets involved more deeply in responsibilities which he cannot meet. At last he is compelled to stop payment; his property is attached, and all his transactions are brought to light. Then come disclosures which cause exultation among the enemies of religion, and fill the hearts of Christians with disappointment and sorrow. In all mercantile communities we find the records of the churches sullied with such cases of disci-

pline. The property of every man is always, more or less, exposed to casualities; but his integrity should never be endangered. No temptations should seduce him to enter upon transactions of questionable morality. If a man borrows money, when in circumstances in which the lender would fear to let him have it, if he knew what those circumstances were, he is morally if not legally fraudulent. He is trampling upon that great principle of brotherhood, which the Bible enjoins, and God will not hold him guiltless. Let him not say, the temptation is great. He must not yield to the temptation. If necessary, he must let his property go, and save his character. Faith, without works, is dead. He, whose views of religion do not constrain him to be strictly upright in all his intercourse with his fellow men, is wretchedly deceived in his hopes. He who blasphemes his God, is as well entitled to the name of Christian, as he who defrauds his fellow. Essential as is faith in Christ to salvation, it is no more earnestly enjoined upon us than is integrity of heart and life. In other words, a deficiency of the latter should be regarded as conclusive proof of entire destitution of the former. Reader, if you are not morally honest, do not pretend to be a Christian. If your promise is not as good as your bond; if your word is not as worthy of credit as your most

solemn oath; if all your transactions with your fellow men are not in accordance with principles of perfect integrity, the less you *say* about religion the better for yourself and for the cause of Christ. Christ expects that his disciples will be honest. The world expects that those who profess to be governed by the principles of the Gospel, will be above any species of deception or fraud. And no man more thoroughly deserves contempt, and will more surely receive it, than the professing Christian whose word may not be depended upon, and whose transactions will not bear examination.

Not long since there was, in a certain parish, unusual interest upon the subject of religion. It was one of those scenes of religious revival, in which nearly all the community were impressed with the importance of their eternal interests. A meeting was appointed in the vestry Sabbath evening. The house was crowded to overflowing. As the pastor enforced the claims of God's law, and unfolded the retributions of the eternal world, tears of solicitude and contrition gushed forth from many an eye. All hearts seemed moved like the leaves of the forest by the passing wind. A member of the church was called upon to lead in prayer. He did it with the sincerity and the fervor of a truly good man. As he had adorned his profession for many years by

an irreproachable life, all had confidence in him, and the conviction of the importance of religion was deepened upon the minds of the audience.

There was a lawyer present, who was a member of the church. He was a hard man. He loved money, and seized it with an unyielding grasp. And though he never so grossly violated principles of honesty, as to expose himself to church censure, he was so often guilty of petty meanness, and made so many oppressive bargains, that he was almost universally obnoxious. This man rose to speak. He earnestly urged the duty of repentance, and the importance of preparing for heaven. All looked at him with surprise. As he proceeded in his exhortation the tear was dried from almost every eye, and the feeling of religious concern was allayed in almost every heart. As he closed his remarks, nearly all appearance of religious interest had passed away; and, as the assembly retired in groups to their homes, many were heard to say, "If that man has religion, I wish for none of it." Opposers of religion pointed to him and said, "There is a specimen of what you call piety." As the pastor visited his parishioners during the week, he found that the remarks of this man had done incalculable injury. He found that the religious interest was rapidly abating, and the abatement was distinctly traceable to this

one cause. And solely on this account, he was under the necessity of preaching, the next Sabbath, upon the subject, that religion must not be condemned in consequence of the misconduct of its professors.

Reader, if your life does not conform to the principles you profess, say nothing about religion. The louder your professions, and the more ardent your zeal, the worse it is for the cause of Christ.

Rowland Hill relates an anecdote well worthy of preservation. "A barber, having amassed a comfortable independence, retired to his native place, where he became a preacher in a small chapel. Another person, from the same village, being similarly fortunate, settled there also, and attended the ministry of the barber. This person, wanting a new wig, said to his pastor, '*you* might as well make it for me;' to which he assented. The wig was sent home, badly made, but charged at nearly double the usual price. The good man said nothing, but whenever any thing particularly profitable escaped the lips of the preacher, he observed to himself, 'excellent —but oh! the wig.' When the barber prayed with apparent unction, he also thought, 'this should touch my heart,—*but oh! the wig.*' Now my dear young brethren," says the venerable Rowland Hill, "wherever you are placed, *remember the wig.*"

If you would be useful as a Christian, and enjoy peace of mind, you must so live, that every one who sees you will say, "There is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

2. Be generous. See this Christian purchasing a coat. He tries to beat down the shopkeeper's price, and stands at his counter half an hour higgling, that he may save a few cents in the purchase. If he knows that the shopkeeper is in great want of money, and by taking advantage of his necessities, obtains the cloth at less than its original cost, he congratulates himself much upon his good bargain. He has no objection at all, thus to transfer property from the pockets of his neighbor to his own. Conscience tells him that it is hardly consistent with that brotherly interest which Christianity enjoins, for him to manifest such selfishness. While he ought to desire to obtain his goods at a reasonable price, he ought also to desire that the merchant should make a fair profit. Instead of exulting that he can buy goods at less than cost, it should give him sincere pain that any one is under the necessity of making such a pecuniary sacrifice. One of these selfish heartless men will try to appease the reproaches of conscience by saying, "I am thus careful to save every copper, that I may have more money to give to benevolent objects." In other words, he implies

that God wants dollars more than generous souls. To say nothing of the impiety of such an imputation, there is no sincerity in it. Almost invariably, when any application is made to such a man in behalf of the needy at home or abroad, he holds his money with a grasp which hardly any appeal can unclench.

We once knew a clergyman of eminent abilities and devoted zeal, who was execrated by every shopkeeper in the village in which he resided. He would never buy if he could borrow. And when compelled to buy, no price could be moderate enough to satisfy his desires. He was a bye-word and a scoffing to nearly all his neighbors, in consequence of the meanness he manifested in every business transaction. He thus not only greatly impaired his own influence, but prejudiced the whole community against the religion he preached. He grew rich, of course, but with increasing riches there was increasing parsimony. And though he would occasionally contribute with considerable liberality, to some object of benevolence, the influence of his example upon the community around him, was infinitely disastrous. Error was strengthened, and sinners were confirmed in irreligion. Whatever good might have been conferred upon the cause of Christ, by his pecuniary contributions, was

vastly more than counterbalanced by his influence upon his own neighborhood.

Probably the only reason why God asks for money in the promotion of his cause, is that he may cultivate in the hearts of his children, feelings of generosity. The treasury of the Almighty needs no replenishing. He might raise thousands of servants, and send them to and fro through the world, to proclaim his cause, and feed them with the manna of heaven, and clothe them by his own care. He might send from heaven an army of angels to accomplish his purposes. God does not need our coppers. He has seen fit, in his wisdom, to make use of human instrumentality in the conversion of the world, and he calls upon his children for their pecuniary aid and their voluntary labors, not for his good, but for their own. A man may as reasonably hope to please God, by stealing money to contribute to benevolent objects, as to raise it for that purpose by meanness. It is an insult to the character of our Maker, to suppose that he can accept of such offerings.

The Christian should be a high-minded, generous man. He should desire to pay a fair price for every thing that he buys. And while he should be diligent in business, and prudent in his expenditures, and while he should guard,

with the utmost caution, against extravagance and prodigality, he should avoid every thing, that appears even, small or ungenerous. In making change, let him not try to save the doubtful half cent. Many a Christian has, by saving half a cent in making change, fixed an indelible prejudice upon an immortal mind against religion. By pursuing this course, you may not be able to wear quite so fine a coat as you otherwise would wear. You may not enjoy so many luxuries. But you will have a generous soul, and that is in itself an inestimable reward. You will have the confidence and the esteem of the community, and that is a priceless blessing. And, above all, you will adorn the glorious Gospel of our God and Savior; you will disarm prejudice, and allure others to that religion which bears such fruit. Do you wish to unite with your neighbor in doing any work which will be for your mutual advantage—in putting up a fence, or digging a drain, or repairing the road? Be always ready in doing a little more than your part. Does your neighbor, of equal property, take a newspaper? Do not borrow it of him without conferring favors in return, which shall be fully equivalent. Does your neighbor wish to borrow *your* newspaper? Most freely and most cheerfully loan it to him, with-

out expecting any return. You may in this way, perhaps, leave a few hundred dollars less to your heirs; but you leave to them the influence of your example, and the remembrance of your virtues. You will leave behind you the savor of a good name. And above all, religion will be honored in the eyes of the community by your example. Your happiness does not consist in the texture of your coat, or the richness of your furniture, or your shares in bank stock. It consists in the wealth and dignity of your soul. You must look within you for the sources of true joy. Covetousness demeans the soul, and destroys its capability of happiness. If you can see in your soul the secret windings of this hateful serpent, crush its head. The poor man may be bountiful and magnanimous, as well as the rich man; nay, he more frequently is so. It is the man who is comparatively rich, who is generally seen to be mean and niggardly.

But here let us more particularly remember that generosity and prodigality are as different as are virtue and vice. We must be just, as well as generous. See this man going from store to store, buying freely at any prices, having it charged on a running account, and entirely unmindful that a pay day is soon to come. He is as open handed as the day. By and by

the shop-keeper sends in his bill; but there is no money to pay for it. Another bill is sent in, but it cannot be paid. Pecuniary embarrassments gather around the man, and he struggles as he works himself deeper and deeper into debt. He fails. His property pays twenty-five cents on the dollar, and his creditors lose the rest. Is this generosity? No! it is fraud. The man who thus trifles with the property of another is guilty in the sight of God, and he must answer for his crime at that bar where Christ sits in righteous judgment. Generosity is a sad misnomer for such conduct as this.

A gentleman once dined at the table of a poor clergyman. The fare was frugal in the extreme. The clergyman made a brief and appropriate apology, by saying, "My wife, sir, is generous, but she is just; it is only by extreme economy that we are able, with our income, to meet our expenses." This man was truly generous. He would do no mean thing. He wished to pay a fair price for whatever he bought, and if he could not afford to purchase one thing, he would take another. But he was also just. He would not involve himself in debt which he had no means of paying. He would not live freely at the expense of others. Christian reader, let your motto be, *generous, but just.*

3. Be open-hearted. Sometimes we see a man who has all his feelings and opinions locked up in his own heart. He talks mysteriously, and with jesuitical skill. Every word is uttered with a most important and cautious air, as though he were saying, "I know a great many things which it would not be proper to reveal. I am a very prudent man, and very guarded in my speech." Said a gentleman, after conversing half an hour with such a man, "Thank heaven, I have none of that sneaking virtue called prudence." Genuine prudence is a heavenly virtue of priceless worth. But this sly, underhand, insinuating mysteriousness is any thing but a virtue. It is an offence to every candid mind. We have sometimes seen a foolish school-boy get some little thing in a box, and then run about among his playmates, triumphantly shaking it, and exclaiming to one and another, "You do not know what I have got here;" thus endeavoring to excite curiosity and to leave it ungratified. Thus will one of these self-styled prudent men, if he is so fortunate as to catch a secret, walk about among his friends and acquaintances, with mysterious and pompous solemnity of countenance, intimating to every one, "Some very important information has been entrusted me, but I am so prudent that

I shall not reveal it." Why does he do so. He is influenced by vanity. He wishes you to think that he is very much in the confidence of others. There can be no genuine prudence without candor and open-heartedness. If hou have any information which it is improper to communicate, do not, by affected airs, tell every body of it, but leave it quietly to sleep in your own mind, and be frank and guileless in your social intercourse. "What kind of a man is Mr. B.?" said one gentleman to another. "I am not in the habit of talking about my neighbors," was the reply of the prudent man. Such a reply is, first, insulting, for it says to the gentleman inquiring, "You have no business to ask such a question." It is, secondly, slanderous; for it decisively, yet not honestly, says, "He is such a bad man, that I will say nothing about him." Now if this is prudence, it is in truth a sneaking virtue. One may be honest and frank and civil, without slandering his neighbors.

Another man seems to feel that nothing must be done in a strait forward way. He covets the reputation of being a good manager. Every plan must be accomplished by manœuvering. If a thing is done openly and frankly, he thinks it must be done without skill. One of these shrewd, artful men insinuates himself around,

here and there, prying into one man's concerns, and whispering to another; here giving a knowing wink, and there laughing in his sleeve, till he loses the confidence of every one, in the acquired reputation of artfulness or cunning. The idea of strait forward dealing never enters his mind. "He drinks his tea by stratagem."

There is no religion in all this. A man should deprecate the reputation of being a cunning man,—an artful manœuverer,—as much as he would the accusation of meanness or fraud. If you cannot accomplish your benevolent designs openly and candidly, let them fail. Leave stratagems and wiles to Satan; they are his congenial weapons. God will not thank you for introducing such allies into his service.

A distinguished clergyman once advised a young man, just entering a place of unusual responsibility, never to do any thing which he was unwilling to have known, and then, said he, you will always feel safe. Better advice could hardly have been given.

If you wish to lend a thoughtless friend a religious book, do it openly and frankly, and do not pretend to do it by accident. If you wish to introduce a friend to an evening lecture, give him an honest invitation, and do not take him there by guile. In every thing that you do, be

as open-hearted as the day. Then will you feel peace, and those who are around you, fearing no stratagem, will give you their confidence.

How pleasant is it to meet a friend, who has benignity and frankness ever upon his countenance. You have entire confidence in his sincerity, and all his actions are as undisguised as the sun-light. You feel at perfect ease in his society, and are in no fear of pious or impious frauds. You cannot withhold your confidence from such a spirit, for you know that his good will is unfeigned, and that no plots are laid to entrap you to good or to evil.

This is the spirit the Christian should cherish. Then he fears no detection. His mind is as calm and tranquil as a summer's day.

4. Be polite. A clergyman once said, that it was beneath the dignity of a Christian to be a gentleman. His practice was consistent with his principle. Rude in feelings, and uncultivated in manners, he trampled upon all the civilities of life, and rendered himself almost universally obnoxious. Though every man cannot be acquainted with the rules of highly refined society, no one is excusable for being harsh and rude, and uncivil. He who has a heart glowing with kindness and good will towards his fellow men, and who is guided in the exercise

of these feelings by good common sense, is the truly polite man. Politeness does not consist in wearing a white silk glove, and in gracefully lifting your hat as you meet an acquaintance; it does not consist in artificial smiles and flattering speech, but in sincere and honest desires to promote the happiness of those around you; in the readiness to sacrifice your own ease and comfort to add to the enjoyments of others. The poor negro women, who found Mungo Park perishing under the palm trees of Africa, and who led him to their hut, and supplied him with food, and lulled him to sleep with their simple songs, were genuinely polite. They addressed him in language of kindness and sympathy; they led him tenderly to their home, and did all in their power to revive his drooping spirits.

A poor drover was driving his beeves to the market, in a winter's day. The cattle met a lady in the path, and apparently unconscious of the impoliteness, compelled the lady to turn one side into the snow. "Madam," said the drover, apologising for the rudeness of his herd, "if the cattle knew as much as I do, you should not walk in the snow." That drover was, in the best sense of the term, a gentleman, while many a young man, in Washington-street, or Broadway, with glove and cane and graceful step, is a brute.

The man, who lays aside all selfishness, in regard to the happiness of others, who is ever ready to confer favors, who speaks in language of kindness and conciliation, and who studies to manifest those little attentions which gratify the heart, is a polite man, though he may wear a homespun coat, and make a very ungraceful bow. And many a fashionable, who dresses genteely, and enters the most crowded apartments with assurance and ease, is a perfect compound of rudeness and incivility. True politeness is a virtue of the understanding and of the heart. It is not like the whited sepulchre, or like Sodom's far famed fruit. There are no rules, for the exercise of this virtue, more correct and definite than those laid down in the New Testament. There is no book of politeness comparable with the Bible. Let us examine some of these directions.

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. By love serve one another.

"Cease from anger and forsake wrath. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly. A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.

"Love peace. Have peace one with another. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Live in peace, and the God of all peace shall be with you.

"Thou shalt honor the face of the old man. Be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

"Let us not be weary with well doing. As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men. Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. Charge them that are rich, that they do good; that they be rich in good works. To do good, and communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

"Brethren be all of one mind, having compassion, one of another. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. Be pitiful, be courteous.

"The fruit of the spirit is gentleness, kindness. The wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle. The servant of the Lord must be gentle.

"Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted. Be kindly affectioned one to another. Put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of

mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness. Add to godliness brotherly kindness."

Can a person obey such precepts as these, and yet be rude and uncivil? can he take these rules for his guide, and yet not be in heart a gentleman? It is impossible. These directions contain the very essence of genuine politeness. And these rules can be practiced by all—by the noble in his princely mansion, and by the poor and lonely farmer, in his log house in the wilderness. Says Dr. Johnson, "I have, indeed, not found, among any part of mankind less real and rational complaisance, than among those who have passed their time in paying and receiving visits, in frequenting public entertainments, in studying the exact measures of ceremony, and in watching all the variations of fashionable courtesy.

They know indeed at what hour they shall be at the door of an acquaintance, how many steps they must attend him towards the gate, and what interval should pass before his visit is returned; but seldom extend their care beyond the exterior or unessential part of civility; nor refuse their own vanity any gratification, however expensive to the quiet of another."

No one can be excusable who has not this genuine politeness of the heart. It is an im-

portant part of religion. The christian should not only studiously strive to cherish these feelings, but while avoiding foppery and affectation, should endeavor to cultivate agreeable manners, and avoid every practice which is offensive. There is no occasion for any one, however poor or humble he may be in life, to be vulgar and brutish. Let your language be mild and benignant, according to the injunctions of the Bible. Have that regard to the feelings of others which you would wish others to have for your own. Treat those with deference and respect who are deserving of respect, and treat all with kindness, and you are a christian gentleman, though your days may be passed in hard labor, and your hand may never have been covered with a glove. It is as contrary to christianity to be rude and uncivil, as it is to be a slanderer or a debauchee. Discourtesy is sin. He whose heart is truly imbued with the spirit of the gospel, can not be ungentlemanly. He may not have ease and polish of person, but he will be mild and affectionate and benevolent. He will study to avoid every thing that is offensive to others, and will do what he can to promote the enjoyment of those around him.

Sometimes we meet with a Christian who prides himself upon being a plain spoken man.

He pays no regard to the feelings of others. He apparently loves to shew his contempt of all the civilities of life. Such a man is about half a savage. The ingredients of his character are ignorance, self conceit, and spiritual pride. Rudeness he calls candor, brutality, frankness, and insolence, christian fidelity. It is lamentable to see such a man, dishonoring religion, by professing to be governed by its principles. He always makes difficulty, and is always in difficulty. You can do nothing with him, but let him alone;—and in all probability he will not let you do that. "Seest thou a man who is wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

5. Be a good neighbor. Among the pleasant things which are enjoyed here on earth, one of the most desirable is, to have good neighbors. And there are but few annoyances more vexatious than those caused by neighbors who are fault finding, censorious, and disobliging. It is vain for any man to pretend that he is governed by the principles of the gospel, if he does not exhibit in his character the feelings inculcated in the precept, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This should teach us to do every thing in our power to avoid exposing a neighbor to trouble or expense, while it should be our

great pleasure to confer favors. If your neighbor does any thing, that is trespassing upon your rights, quietly submit to it, unless it be of such a nature that you feel in duty bound to remonstrate. But be very careful never to be guilty of a similar wrong yourself.

A man wished to drain a marshy pool in his garden, and very impudently turned the water in, under the fence, to his neighbor's garden. The gentleman whose rights were thus invaded was a christian. He said nothing, but immediately employed a man to dig a trench and provide for the removal of the water. He greeted his neighbor, as he daily met him, with his accustomed cordiality, and was more careful than ever to set him the examples of integrity and high minded generosity. Whether the man who was guilty of this meanness ever felt ashamed of his conduct, we cannot tell, but this we know, that the harmony which had existed between the two families, was uninterrupted, and they lived, side by side, year after year, in perfect peace.

Said another one, who lived near by, and witnessed this transaction, "It is an outrage that I would not tolerate. I would build a strong dam by the side of my fence and drive the water back again upon him." This is the spirit of the world. Let us see how this plan would have

worked. In the first place it would have enraged the individual thus frustrated in his sordid undertaking. And the more fully conscious he was that he was in the wrong, the more would his malignity have been excited. We can better bear the injuries which others inflict upon us, than the consciousness that it is our own dishonorable conduct, which has involved us in difficulties. He immediately would have adopted retaliatory measures, and either have thrust his bar through the opposing wall, or have contrived some other scheme, by which he might annoy his adversary. Provocations and retaliations would have ensued in rapid succession. A family feud would at once have been enkindled, extending to the children as well as the parents, which probably would never have been extinguished. Immediately there would have ensued a train of petty annoyances, leading eventually to an expensive lawsuit, and embittering years of life.

As it was, the christian gentleman governed his conduct by the principles of the gospel. He submitted to the wrong; and probably by submitting to it, in the spirit which Christianity enjoins, converted the event into a blessing to himself, his family and his neighbor. He let alone strife before it was meddled with. The

harmony of the families were not disturbed. The occurrence was forgiven, and in a few days forgotten, and they lived years, side by side in friendship and prosperity and perfect peace. Is it not better to follow the advice God gives, than to surrender ourselves to the dominion of our own passions. The man who adopts for his motto, "I will not be imposed upon," who resolves to contend against any, and every infringement of his rights, at all hazards, pays dearly for his inflexibility. He thinks that he knows what course is best for his interests, better than God, and acting accordingly, he must endure the consequences. He must live upon the boisterous ocean of contention, and his heart must be like the troubled sea, that casts up mire and dirt. We must learn to submit to many wrongs. We must not keep too strict an account of debtor and creditor with our neighbors. We must freely confer favors, but reluctantly tax the benevolence of others.

The Bible inculcates upon us the great truth, that we are all members of one common family, having one common father, and we should regard every member of the human family as a brother and a friend. Let this principle get full possession of the heart, and we shall be continually casting oil upon the troubled waters of life.

Neighbors will reciprocate kindness like affectionate brothers. They will overlook those infirmities to which we are all liable, and seek to promote another's welfare as well as their own.

How many opportunities are presented in the varying events of every family, in which there is a call for the assistance and the sympathies of neighbors. Often a kind expression of interest is of more value than words can describe. It comes as a balm to the heart. Your neighbor's family is sick. Kind inquiries sent to the door, or a message of condolence to the sick one, confers real gratification. God has so constituted the human heart, that nothing affords it more pleasure, than the consciousness of the interest and the affections of others, and but few sorrows are harder to bear, than those occasioned by indifference and neglect. These little acts of neighborly kindness do much towards smoothing the rugged path of life.

I remember being deeply impressed in early childhood, with the value of a slight attention of this kind. There was a gentleman from Holland, of elevated rank in his native land, and highly cultivated mind and polished manners, who, by many reverses of fortune, lost health and property, and in a confirmed consumption, was languishing in his chamber, entirely de-

pendant upon the kindness of his friends. To one accustomed to the walks of luxury and to the deference of high station, this situation must have been most acutely painful. He however submitted to it with the dignity of a gentleman and the fortitude of a christian. An aged lady, to whose bounty he had been indebted for many favors was also taken sick, and prostrated, apparently upon a bed of death. As they were both confined to their beds, kind messages of inquiry daily passed between them. One afternoon, the gentleman with languid hand took from beneath his pillow his snuff box, and taking from it a pinch, sent it with his affectionate regards to his sick friend, for her to partake with him of the narcotic, equally grateful to both. As the infirm lady reached out her hand to the open box, her eyes were moistened with tears, and her heart was filled with pleasurable emotions in receiving an attention so delicate and so expressive. Such an evidence of sincere and heartfelt kindness called into exercise the very finest emotions of the soul. It is by cherishing this class of feelings, and by manifesting them in our intercourse with others, that we are to exhibit the spirit of the gospel. We are glad to believe that the day of snuff boxes is fast passing away, but we rejoice in the

hope that the day of neighborly kindness and refined attentions is more rapidly approaching.

This is a cold and unfeeling world. In the eager pursuit of wealth and honor, the best affections of the heart are crushed. The professed disciples of Jesus live in most criminal conformity to these prevailing habits. And thus, among christians, there are heart burnings and jealousies, contentions and strife. But our great business here on earth, is to cultivate those feelings which are to fit us for our Heavenly home. We ought to live as an angel would live, were he to come to pass a few years among men, with a heart glowing with the benevolence and the purity and the love of Heaven. Let your imagination wing its flight to that blissful world. Contemplate some scene of angels, as they go in and out of blest mansions, or congregate in bands for praise or joy. Imagine the benignity that lights up every countenance, the limitless benevolence that glows in every heart. Then turn to earth, and, as far as in you lies, bring this spirit to earth. So cultivate these graces of manners and of the mind, as to shew by your life that religion is in truth the spirit of heaven.

6. Take an interest in the spiritual welfare of your neighbors. It is immortality which constitutes the dignity of man. It is that intermin-

able existence, reaching onward beyond the grave, which invests life with its tremendous importance. We are assured by Him who cannot be deceived, that the existence here commenced on earth, never, never, shall terminate. Though this globe may crumble; though the sun, which has so long blazed in the heavens, may go out in eternal night; though all the worlds, which an almighty hand has scattered through infinity, may fall and decay like the leaves of autumn, the soul of man, unimpaired in its energies, shall survive all.

> "The sun is but a spark of fire,
> A transient meteor in the sky.
> The soul, immortal as its sire,
> Shall never die."

With what grandeur does this invest the nature of man! Immortality! who can conceive the idea? What imagination can reach onward in the comprehension of the limitless ages in which the mind is destined to exist? When we compare the threescore years and ten of human life, with the millions and millions yet untold of coming ages, oh what a speck, what a nothingness, does life become! Various illustrations have been suggested to convey to the mind some idea of illimitable duration. It has been said, suppose one drop of the ocean should be dried

up every thousand years; how long would it be before the last drop should disappear, and the ocean's bed be left dry and dusty? Far onward as that would be in coming ages, eternity would but have commenced. It would still be in its earliest hours of infancy.

It has been said, suppose that this vast globe upon which we tread were composed of particles of the finest sand, and that one particle should disappear at the termination of each million of years; oh, how inconceivably immense must be the period which would elapse before the last particle would be gone! And yet eternity would then be in its morning twilight; the immortal spirit would then have but just entered upon its interminable career.

It has been said, suppose some little insect, so small as to be imperceptible to the human eye, were to carry this world, by its tiny mouthfuls, to the most distant star the hand of God has placed in the heavens. Hundreds of millions of years are required for the performance of a single journey. The insect commences upon the leaf of a tree, and takes its little load, so small that even the microscope cannot discover that it is gone, and sets out upon its almost endless journey. After millions and millions of years have rolled away, it arrives back again to take

its second load. Oh, what interminable ages must pass before the one leaf would be removed! In what period of coming time would the whole tree be borne away? When would the forest be gone? And when would that insect take the last particle of this globe, and bear it away in its long, long journey? Even then, eternity would but have commenced. The spirit then in existence would still look forward to eternity, endless, unchangeable, illimitable, rolling before it. Oh! the mind sinks down perfectly exhausted with such contemplations. Yes! our existence runs parallel with that of God. So long as he endures, so long shall that flame, which he has breathed into our bosoms, glow and burn; but it must glow in the brilliance and the beauty of heaven, or burn with lurid flame and unextinguishable wo. We may exist, exulting before the throne of God; interchanging sweet sympathy with angels of loftiest nature; flying as glittering seraphs amid heaven's indescribable splendor:

> "Winged on the winds, and warbling hymns of love,
> Behold the blessed soar to worlds above."

We may be enduring the most irrepressible agony, during all those periods of duration which no combination of numbers can compute.

FATHER! now the day is shining,
Shadows dark are chas'd away;
Cheerfully the bright sun rising,
Summons us to kneel and pray.

GOD! we thank thee for the morning,
How its freshness fills the frame!
Nature all hath felt the blessing,
All, with us, doth praise thy name.

Swift will pass away the morning,
Melting into yellow noon;
Teach us, Lord, to prize these moments
That must fly from us so soon.

Soon around his weary children,
Night's dark curtain, God will fold;
He, who marks the falling sparrow,
Every sleeping frame will hold.

So, will flit life's sunny morning,
So, will fade life's glowing noon;
Life and labor must give over
To the shadows of the tomb.

From Death's chill and heavy slumbers,
God will call us into light;
To a morn that knows no fading,
To a noon for ever bright.

"The curs'd, with hell uncovered to the eye,
Shriek, shriek, and vanish with a whirlwind cry."

While therefore we should do all in our power to alleviate every temporal sorrow, and to promote earthly happiness; while we should desire to see every human habitation filled with domestic joy; we should ever remember that there is something else demanding our attention infinitely more important. The blessings which elevate man, and cheer his path for a few years alone, are soon lost and forgotten in the realities of unending ages. That period of man's history will soon arrive, in which it will be of no moment how many trials and sorrows were scattered in his earthly path. The one great object to be attained in life, is to save the soul from the fearful consequences of sin, to lead the immortal spirit to the congenial home of its immortality; to ennoble him with heavenly purity, that he may be raised to his native skies, and his heart be filled with that happiness which is found at God's right hand.

It is for the salvation of the soul, above all things else, that we should feel and pray and labor; that when corruption breaks down the mortal body, and the spirit returns to God who gave it, it may then range infinity, buoyant with life, and through eternity glow and burn with

the raptures of adoration. It is consequently one of the most important of every man's duties, to try to exert a Christian influence upon those around him; to lead sinners to penitence and to Christ. Your neighbors are especially intrusted to your Christian sympathies. You should watch for opportunities to do them good. While guarding against all incivility or unauthorised intrusion, you should embrace every favorable opportunity to lead the mind to contemplate responsibility at God's bar, a Savior's dying love, the Spirit's earnest pleadings. If you have a heart glowing with Christian feeling, the exercise of ordinary good sense will shew you when you may with propriety invite him to accompany you to an evening meeting, or to meet with a few Christian friends in your own house for prayer; when you may loan him a serious book, or address him personally and directly upon the interests of his soul. With good common sense and right feelings, we cannot easily err upon these points. Take your neighbor's hand, as he lies upon his bed, prostrate with sickness, and direct his thoughts to the Savior bleeding for his sins. Speak to the mother, as she looks with tearful eyes upon the sick and suffering babe she holds in her arms, of the Savior who has said, suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them

not—and who, by this affliction, is endeavoring to wean her heart from the world.

The habit, which some professed Christians fall into, of continually moralizing, disgusts and repels; especially does it do so, if one is guilty of dishonorable actions, and manifests, by his own life, the grasping spirit of the world. If your habits of life are not conformable with the precepts of the Gospel, the less you say about the Gospel the better. Kind admonition, supported by the influence of corresponding example, is almost irresistible.

While you feel this especial interest for those who are peculiarly exposed to the influence of your avowed feelings and allowed practices, you should also remember that, in the sense of the Bible, every individual in this sinful and suffering world is your neighbor. You should feel for the spiritual wants of the whole human family; for the benighted tribes roving in our western wilderness; for the unnumbered millions of China; for the wretched idolaters of India; for the benighted multitudes dwelling in the islands of the sea. You should enlist, with all your energies, in the great enterprise of converting a lost world to God. This is an object worth living for—worth dying for. Where is there a heart which can feel, that will not feel in such a

cause as this. Where is the bosom, susceptible of a generous emotion, that will not throb with its warmest pulsations, in view of such an enterprise? Oh! it is a glorious thing, to be coworkers with God, in the deliverance of a world from the slavery of sin.

Such is the mode of life the Bible enjoins,—the path of happiness which the Bible points out. No one has ever entered this path, and been deceived in his hopes. Every other course of life has been tried, again and again, with never-failing disappointment. Why can we not learn by the experience of ages? Why will we not heed the testimony which comes from every dying bed? Why will we not regard the declarations of God? Reader! obey these directions, and you will find that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

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